

A NARRATIVE HERSTORY OF WOMEN'S STUDIES
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

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In the late 1960's the academic field of Women's Studies was created to give women a more equal education and a more accurate reflection of their history and impact on society. At the University of North Texas the effort to implement Women's Studies was not begun seriously until the late 1980's. This paper covers the effort to establish Women's Studies at UNT. My thesis is that this has been a grassroots effort led by professors and students who succeeded not only in establishing Women's Studies but also in changing the face and feeling of the University, creating a more positive environment for women. The bulk of the paper is made up of narrative selections drawn from oral history interviews with key individuals.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	ii
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Chapters

1. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY.....	1
2. A SHORT HISTORY OF WOMEN’S EDUCATION.....	17
3. A HERSTORY OF WOMEN’S STUDIES.....	35
4. PRE-HISTORY, AND WOMEN’S STUDIES AT UNT UNDER THE DIRECTION OF DR. MARTHA NICHOLS.....	56
5. DR. EDRA BOGLE AND THE PERIOD FROM 1992-1994.....	71
6. DR. BARBARA RODMAN AND THE PERIOD FROM 1994-1997.....	94
7. DR. CLAIRE SAHLIN, AND THE FUTURE.....	158
8. CONCLUSION.....	182

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

This paper will attempt to cover the herstory of Women's Studies and activism related to or inspired by Women's Studies at UNT, specifically the attempt to establish a Women's Studies Program at the university. My thesis is that this struggle has been a grassroots effort led by individual students and professors who have succeeded not only in getting Women's Studies on the books but in changing the face and feeling of the university, helping to create a more positive environment for women at UNT.

The content of this paper will reflect my feeling that traditional histories have left out much of what is important in the stories they purport to tell. Such a traditional history of this subject gleaned from university records would likely reveal only that Women's Studies appeared in the catalog in 1975, professors were given release time by the English department to act as Women's Studies coordinator in 1988, funding for graduate students was granted by the Provost's office in 1995, and that a working Women's Studies office with its own director and staff was established in 1997. Because of the "top down" view of history that pervades most historical work (also known as the "great man" theory of history) if the question of why and how the program was established were raised at all, the answers would likely focus only on the actions and motivations of Provost Blaine Brownell and Dean of Arts and Sciences Nora Kizer Bell, the administrators who made the final decisions that in effect established Women's Studies as a viable academic entity

at UNT. But there was a long and difficult struggle to get Women's Studies on the university's agenda to the point where Brownell and Bell could take action. I believe that is this struggle which constitutes the important herstory of Women's Studies at UNT, and without including the story of this struggle, one would only be scratching the surface, and thus be left with an utterly incomplete history.

Through my previous coursework and research activities I have been able to conduct several oral history interviews with faculty and students involved in Women's Studies at UNT. Feminist researcher Sherna Gluck has noted that the "...great strength of oral history lies in the ease with which all kinds of voices can be recorded by all kinds of researchers. No longer does the 'record' depend upon a scholarly consensus on the choice of lives to be counted as significant" (221).

At the opposite end of the scale from the "great man" theory of history are those who believe oral histories should only be conducted with those who have been voiceless. A common question I heard when I was beginning my oral history interviews was whether academic matters such as the creation of a Women's Studies program was an appropriate topic for an oral history project. The idea was expressed to me that oral histories should be reserved for people who had lived through something, and that decisions made by academics did not seem to fall into this category. But as Shulamit Reinharz writes "Aside from oral history studies of relatively powerless people [...] some feminist autobiographical/life history work is done among people who are literate and highly educated but who have experiences that have remained hidden [...] These products do not 'give voice to the voiceless,' but rather allow a different voice within some person

to emerge” (143). That the experiences of women at UNT in working to promote Women’s Studies have remained hidden is born out by the fact that a professor who was one of the main supporters of Women’s Studies at UNT told me that as far as she knew there had been no bloody battles or even a war of words. As I think my paper and the words of the women involved will show, women have expended incredible amounts of energy -- as well as blood, sweat, and tears -- in this effort. The fact that even faculty members who are totally committed to Women’s Studies are unaware of these efforts and the personal toll women have paid to promote Women’s Studies at UNT is perhaps the greatest proof that such a paper is needed. Women’s Studies at UNT was not established because a few academics and administrators were sitting around one day and thought, “Hey, it’s 1995, why don’t we catch up with the rest of the world and start a Women’s Studies program.” On the contrary, women, including very young women students, have paid a high personal price to make the gains we have now experienced possible, and it is important that they receive credit for the work they’ve done and the sacrifices they’ve made. I believe it is equally important that others who may later take this path have the benefit of the wisdom and notes of caution of those who have fought so hard and so successfully at UNT.

Full length oral history interviews, ranging from ninety minutes to four hours, were completed with four professors and three students with special insights into the history and growth of Women’s Studies at UNT. It is these interviews which make up the bulk of my thesis. Dr. Martha Nichols of the English faculty was the first official coordinator of Women’s Studies at UNT. She began her involvement in 1987. Under her

direction faculty members at UNT began to introduce courses on women throughout the campus, and to introduce those with experience in scholarship on women to each other.

Dr. Max Oelschlaeger, from the Environmental Ethics program in the Department of Philosophy and Religion Studies was one of the professors enlisted in these efforts. He began working with Nichols and Dr. Susan Platt shortly afterward as the first advisory board members.

Dr. Edra Bogle, from English, worked with Dr. Nichols and took over as coordinator from 1992-1994. Under her leadership UNT was chosen as the host site of the South Central Women's Studies Association's Annual Conference for 1995, an event crucial to the growth of Women's Studies at UNT.

Stacy Erickson was a doctoral candidate in English who focused on Women's Studies throughout her UNT career, and published the first newsletter devoted to Women's Studies, The Gaze, from 1993 to 1997. Erickson's work on The Gaze was one of the most crucial factors in informing the campus of the important work being done by women and feminist scholars at UNT.

Dr. Barbara Rodman, also from English, served as coordinator from 1994 to 1997, a period of great growth during which Women's Studies received its first funding for graduate assistantships. This period was also marked by the intimate ties formed between Women's Studies faculty and students.

Beth Eakman was the first student to receive a Master's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies with a concentration in Women's Studies from UNT. Working with the student group she formed, the Women's Studies Roundtable, and Dr. Rodman, Eakman was

central in the successful push for university funding of Women's Studies. Upon graduating with a 4.0 grade point, she was named UNT's Outstanding Woman Graduate Student of 1996.

Sara-Jayne Parsons, a graduate student in Art History, worked as a teaching assistant for Dr. Platt, and helped the Roundtable expand its activities into other areas of the campus. During this effort she was quickly exposed to the troubles women face when they attempt to promote women in a male-dominated academic environment.

These interviews are life histories centered around academics and the development of feminist consciousness. Many feminist researchers have noted that it is crucial to make sure that interviews with women include not only their activities but also their motivations. Margaret Randall, author of Sandino's Daughters, wrote that in addition to finding out what women *did* in the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua, she also "wanted to know how they began to articulate their need to join in the political struggle, how they made the decision, a decision that would affect every facet of their lives, and how they overcame the traditional obstacles thrown up by family and social pressure" (qtd. in Reinhartz 135). Following Randall's example, I wanted to be sure that while the main focus was the interviewee's experience in women's studies or feminist activism at UNT, another focus was the exploration of individual consciousness-raising, i.e., what were the events that led the women to become actively involved in making the world, or the university, a better place for women.

Feminist researchers Peggy Anderson and Susan Armitage believe that "Oral historians should explore emotional and subjective experience as well as facts and

activities” (101), and that “The oral history interview not only allows women to articulate their own experiences but also to reflect upon the meaning of those experiences to them” (102). Anderson and Armitage also pointed out that because it is much easier to document activities than feelings, existing oral histories often don’t portray the centrality of relationships to female activity and identity. (95) At UNT the importance of these relationships and their connection to successful activism is undeniable: Women’s Studies struggled due to a lack of cohesion in the early years, and absolutely exploded later when deep and lasting connections began to be formed between students, faculty, and administrators.

A very important omission in the oral histories used for the bulk of this thesis are the reflections of Provost Blaine Brownell and Dean Nora Kizer Bell, who have both since left the university. While my research has shown that Women’s Studies was promoted from the ground up, that in no way should be seen as dismissing the importance of these two administration figures. Without their support, all of the grassroots work would have probably been done in vain. While my thesis on this period of development is now being completed, it is my hope that the oral history project on Women’s Studies at UNT will be ongoing. While this paper does document some of the actions they took to aid Women’s Studies, oral history interviews with Provost Brownell and Dean Bell would help complete the story, and provide valuable insights into making administrative decisions which help women in an academic and cultural environment which is not always woman-friendly.

Other primary sources which were used were academic papers written by women involved with Women's Studies at UNT. Beth Eakman and the two students who followed her in leading the Women's Studies Roundtable, Gretchen Esely and Julie Behnken, co-authored several versions of a paper documenting the struggle to establish women's studies in the 1990's, titled "Spinning Straw Into Gold." This paper was presented at the National Women's Studies Association Conference in 1995, and won a student award at the Tenth Annual Conference on Women in Higher Education in 1997. The three women further explored the struggle in separate papers the next year at their panel "Academics or Activism: The Identity Crisis Facing Women's Studies Programs." Dr. Diana York Blaine of the English faculty authored a brilliant and insightful look into her internal debate, and her students' reactions, in "Coming Out of the Closet: Teaching Women's Studies in Non-Women's Studies Courses."

Besides these formal sources, I have had the opportunity and the pleasure to speak at length with dozens of women involved in the women's movement at UNT. These women have almost unanimously expressed their affection and need for Women's Studies scholarship and the activism that it often inspires. It is my hope to include at least the names of every single one of these women: all have made a contribution, and all should be recognized.

In addition to the Women's Studies Roundtable, a group founded specifically for the purpose of promoting Women's Studies, two other student groups, the Women's Collective and SisterSpeak (later Sista's Speak) have made significant contributions to Women's Studies. The contributions from these two groups have been both specific and

general. Specifically, the Collective has actively promoted Women's Studies courses and worked closely with the Roundtable. In addition, members of both the Collective and SisterSpeak have enrolled in many Women's Studies courses and supplied many Women's Studies minors. Generally, both groups have made substantial contributions to changing the environment of the campus to make it more feminist aware and feminist friendly. This contribution to creating an atmosphere in which Women's Studies can not only survive, but thrive, must not be underestimated. Although much of the activities of these two student groups may not have been specifically focused on Women's Studies, their impact and role in Women's Studies success is undeniable. Therefore this paper will include some of the struggles and triumphs of both groups in helping create such a supportive environment. As I earlier mentioned the omission of interviews with Dean Bell and Provost Brownell, I believe the importance of the student groups' contribution points out the omission of interviews with Kimberly Olsen, who founded the Collective, Lynn Murray, who co-founded SisterSpeak, and Stephanie Lang, who ran the group as Sista's Speak in 1998.

While traditional academic works usually focus primarily, or exclusively, on the author's summary of events, my paper will rely heavily on the words of women involved in activism at UNT. Women's Studies is in part dedicated to new types of scholarship, and I believe using women's narratives to tell a story -- which is after all their own story - - is much more effective and honest than a detached summation. This is a model which I feel is sorely lacking in academia, where long quotations are seen, sometimes correctly, to be the students' way of filling out papers into which they did not do enough original

writing or thinking. This does not have to be the case; researchers and writers should be capable of providing both their own thoughtful analysis and also including enough original source quotations to allow the reader to make their own decision about the accuracy of the analysis. As far as I can see, the only disadvantage to this method is that it makes the work much longer. But with such complex subject matter, one necessarily concerned with the deep impact on the participants, this could also be considered an advantage. It does ask more of the reader: it is much easier for a reader just to accept another's analysis of source materials than actually to read much of the materials themselves. However, some stories particularly lend themselves to a narrative form, and I believe this is one of them. I hope to break the tradition of dismissing the importance of narratives in academic work, and to encourage researchers to use it in telling other stories.

There are many advantages to being able to read directly what women said about their work and experiences, rather than getting only a second-hand summary of what went on and what they said about it. The first is that the women whose words are included are all intelligent, funny, thoughtful, and extremely articulate. Their words bring the story to life in a way which my summarizing could not hope to match. (This will give the reader a much more interesting and pleasurable read, which should counteract the extra reading required.) In addition, reading their words instead of mine allows a much more honest assessment of the feelings behind the words. Feelings are even harder to summarize than events, and a summary of how someone felt is less meaningful than hearing a person talking about their feelings. Both of these reasons lead to the final advantage, which is that more direct quotes can greatly cut down on the risk of misinterpretation of what was

said. This is especially important to take into account when men are writing about women. There is a long history of men's misinterpretation of women's lives, actions, and words, a history that is in large part what Women's Studies was created to counteract.

This paper will chronologically follow the struggle to establish Women's Studies, using the words of some of the women involved to tell the bulk of the story. Much of the theory at the heart of Women's Studies will be described in these quotations. But while the oral histories and women's writings on the subject matter provide most of the details of the story, I do not pretend that this takes my voice away: I conducted the interviews, and as feminist researcher Sherna Gluck remarked on the collaborative nature of the finished product of an oral history interview: "The oral history became, then, both a personal account defined by the narrator and a historical document that was shaped by my intervention" (206). While Gluck, and all honest interviewers, admit that they have an impact on the interview, it is a goal of oral history interviewers to minimize their impact. The golden rule of oral history is to remember that it is the interviewee's show. The other, more obvious way I impact the story is that I, not the interviewees', choose which parts to include here, without further input from the women whose words I am using.

The academic demands of writing a thesis require the author to not only present, but to analyze the subject matter. This is problematic for me not only because of my belief in the effectiveness of the methods of oral history, but because of the aforementioned history of men's misinformation about women. (Which causes me much discomfort with the idea of a man writing the herstory of a women's movement.) But I have chosen to write this herstory because it is important it be told. So I will try to walk

the fine line between keeping my voice out of the story, yet including it enough to satisfy my academic advisors. Perhaps the most important way I can make sure that the story really is a herstory of Women's Studies, rather than my history of Women's Studies, is to make sure that I don't only include issues which I felt were central to the story, but try also to discern which issues or events the women I interviewed felt were most important, and to make sure they were included.

Calling the paper, "A Herstory" rather than "The Herstory," also reflects a major tenet of my understanding of Women's Studies: that there is no one true version of anything. All knowledge is subjective, and another person could write another herstory of this struggle which might or might not focus on the same events or people, or draw any of the same conclusions. This is only one version of this story. I would strongly encourage anyone interested in getting the whole story to go back and read the original source materials, specifically the oral history interviews with the persons noted above; Beth Eakman, Gretchen Esely, and Julie Behnken's "Spinning Straw Into Gold," and "Academics or Activism: The Identity Crisis Facing Women's Studies Programs;" Diana York Blaine's "Coming Out of the Closet: Teaching Women's Studies in Non-Women's Studies Courses;" and both issues of the SisterSpeak Journal. These documents are much more detailed and particularized than my thesis, and I believe will be very inspirational to anyone who is interested in or fighting for women's rights. (The interviews are on file in the University Archive in the Willis Library as well as the Women's Studies office, the other documents are in the Women's Studies office.)

Of course, there are many who object to the term “herstory.” But to me, there is no question that this is not a “history.” History has not been, as it claims to be, the study of our past. It has instead been, to quote a character from Jane Austen, the study “of the quarrels of popes and kings [...] The men all so good for nothing, and hardly any women at all” (qtd. in Kerber, 34). The term herstory is much more accurate, and importantly, carries with it the implicit indictment of “history.” To add “women” to “history” is simply insufficient. As Adrienne Rich said in her address to the 1998 South Central Women’s Studies Association, “In a language in which they are invisible, women are demeaned.” If there is any doubt of the need to promote inclusive language, it can quickly be dismissed by running a paper on women through a spell-checking program. While I realize it may be a lot to ask the program to recognize feminist created words such as “herstory” or the phonetic spelling practiced by some feminist writers, when the word “foremothers” is rejected and the proper spelling comes back listed as “forefathers,” it becomes undeniable that women are still invisible, and demeaned, in our language.

One limitation of this paper is that it deals particularly with Women’s Studies as a program and with courses dealing specifically with women. However, curricular change, one of the chief goals of Women’s Studies, takes place not only by adding courses on women to the list of course offerings, but by adding women into the traditional “survey” courses. Dr. Blaine’s paper does relate the difficulty of this task.

The other evidence which does appear in this paper, arising from my informal discussions with women students, suggests two things: first, that the courses are still excluding the accomplishments of minorities and women; and second, that the survey

courses which have “opened the canon” to include voices and issues other than those of white men have been mainly the result of individual instructors and teaching assistants taking the initiative to make the courses more inclusive. I believe it would be valuable to have a researcher go through the syllabi of these traditional courses and analyze the extent to which they have or have not begun to take a more inclusive view.

Another very important omission is the matter of actually getting courses on women into the official schedule of courses. Until 1999 there was actually only one course that was created and controlled by Women’s Studies. (Now there are two.) Because of this, while Women’s Studies has urged, encouraged, and assisted academic departments in offering courses on women, the real battles to get more courses on women have necessarily been fought inside the individual departments. While there has been an explosion in course offerings in the late 1990’s, the insights into this process offered by women who related their difficulties suggests that this struggle may have been even more difficult than that to establish the program, and may have taken an even deeper toll on the faculty members and graduate students who pushed this fight, and the fight to make the traditional courses more inclusive.

The following is the outline for the paper with a brief description of each section:

Chapter 1 covers the Introduction and Methodology used for the paper. (This is what you just read.) The next two chapters will give background information, which basically tell the story of why we need Women’s Studies in the first place.

Chapter 2, “A Short History of Women’s Education” covers the struggles women faced to gain access to education, and the onerous nature of the education they received

even after winning this struggle. Chapter 3, “A Herstory of Women’s Studies” gives background information on the birth and growth of Women’s Studies as an academic field some feel is dedicated to, in the words of Audre Lorde, dismantling the “Master’s House.”

The story of the efforts at UNT begins with Chapter 4, “Pre-history of Women’s Studies at UNT, and Women’s Studies at UNT Under the Direction of Dr. Martha Nichols.” It begins by touching very briefly on some key events before the establishment of a coordinator for Women’s Studies at UNT in the late 1980’s. The narrative section of the paper begins with the first coordinated efforts to encourage Women’s Studies across campus, led by Dr. Nichols, who provides most of the story. Dr. Max Oelschlaeger also provides his insights.

Chapter 5, “Women’s Studies at UNT under the direction of Dr. Edra Bogle,” continues the narrative. The ongoing struggle to establish Women’s Studies and to be taken seriously by the university is described by Dr. Bogle. Graduate students Stacy Erickson and Beth Eakman also talk of their original experiences in the fledgling program.

“Women’s Studies at UNT under the direction of Dr. Barbara Rodman,” Chapter 6, covers the period when Women’s Studies won recognition from the campus administration. This is by far the longest chapter because this was the period when Women’s Studies exploded across campus with a flurry of activism. The events are detailed by narratives from oral history interviews with Dr. Rodman and graduate students Beth Eakman, Stacy Erickson, and Sara-Jayne Parsons. Insights are also included

from conference papers by graduate students Gretchen Esely and Julie Behnken, as well as Dr. Diana York Blaine.

I began this paper as Dr. Claire Sahlin was beginning her tenure as the leader of Women's Studies at UNT. It was my original intention for her arrival to mark the end of my paper. However, in the two years I have spent assembling this thesis, incredible gains have been made in the institutionalization of Women's Studies at UNT, and I did not feel I could leave these important events out of the story. Therefore I have included Chapter 7, "Women's Studies Under the Direction of Dr. Claire Sahlin and the Future of Women's Studies at UNT," as a sort of postscript to the story. It is for the most part in non-narrative form, which makes it a rather short section. The section on the future is mainly a summary of the Women's Studies Strategic Plan for 2000-2002 drafted by Dr. Sahlin. While I have attempted to briefly cover the many high points, I hope that in the future another researcher will cover this time in a depth befitting its importance, including conducting an oral history interview with Dr. Sahlin and some of the students who have had the pleasure to work and study in the program under her guidance.

Chapter 8 is the Conclusion. This is a recap of what I believe to be the most important lessons from the struggle to establish Women's Studies at UNT.

A final note on format. This paper adheres to Modern Language Association 1999 guidelines in all respects but two. The first is that I have capitalized Women's Studies in all instances, rather than capitalizing when I am referring to UNT's Women's Studies program and using lower case when referring to the field of women's studies. This is done to prevent awkward looking statements such as the following one from my oral

history interview with Dr. Oelschlaeger, “Blaine Brownell was the first provost who showed any interest whatsoever in women’s studies, and he gave Women’s Studies a little bit of money.” (28) However, when quoting from other sources I have transcribed the capitalization exactly as used in the source material.

The other, more substantial variance is that I have followed the previous MLA guidelines rather than those issued in 1999 by single-spacing quotations. This was done because of very pressing issues of readability and space: because of the very lengthy quotations I have included merely indenting these quotations does not adequately set them apart from my writings, making it harder to tell at first glance whether the reader is reading my work or those I have quoted. I believe both the consistent capitalization of Women’s Studies and single-spacing of quotations makes this a more easily readable and understandable paper.

CHAPTER II

A SHORT HISTORY OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION

Women's education in the western world has been the topic of controversy, debate, and until very recently, neglect. The beliefs that women could not or should not be educated prevailed well into modern times. But despite the feelings of antipathy towards educating and educated women, there is a long history of women succeeding in gaining the tools of education usually reserved for men.

Rosemary Park began her paper "Some Considerations on the Higher Education of Women," by stating that "A brief examination shows that until the nineteenth century frustration, not achievement, had characterized the history of the idea" (Park 3). The Greeks and the Romans recognized the intellectual goddesses Athens or Minerva, but neither society educated women outside of the privileged few. (Park 5) Park believed that early Christianity's negative influence on women's education, in particular the erasure of women role models from the church's teachings, came about because of the decision to emphasize the teachings of St. Paul and the Old Testament story of creation and the fall instead of gospel accounts of women's importance in the ministry of Jesus Christ. (7) Thus, according to Park, "At the end of the patristic age the opportunity to redefine woman's role which might have emerged from Jesus's teaching failed to come to fruition. Instead a few extraordinary women were noted and glorified, while the rest were suspected of being Satan's tools" (9).

Park related that the Monastic Movement's effect on women's education would be more positive, as after the sixth century women entered cloisters for the educational opportunities, as well as to escape parents or arranged marriages. But she also noted the backlash, as tales of the danger educated women posed to pious men began entering the canon. The quality of the education, which had been higher, was also falling by the end of the fourteenth century. In chivalric times, even intelligent women were valued for their beauty, not their intellect. Despite the presence of some female educators outside of convents, there was little education for women in the general public. (Park 10)

Jean O'Barr notes that historian Joan Kelly uncovered writings by many Renaissance women, and gives the example of Christine de Pisan (1364 - 1430), whom she calls the "first female professional writer in France and the first woman of the late middle Ages to champion her sex" (182). Pisan is given credit by many for beginning the *querrelles des femmes*, a four hundred year tradition of writing about women in Europe previous to the French Revolution. (O'Barr 183)

The humanistic revival did promote learning for men and women of the upper classes. While this allowed some women to gain limited access to higher education, piety had to be an especially important part of women's learning. (Park 11) But by the end of the 17th century, educated women would again be arguing on their own behalf. One was Mary Astell, an Englishwoman who penned a study, A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of Their True and Greatest Interest (1696), in which she attacked the double standard faced by women, writing "Women are from their very Infancy debar'd those Advantages the want of which they are afterwards reproached" (qtd. in Park, 12).

Astell had a revolutionary proposal, which she presented to Queen Anne, to ask women to donate money to found a college for women. But the queen was talked out of supporting the proposal by Bishop Burnet. (Park 13)

Park reports that the idea that educating women would lead to trouble with piety was part of the “cultural baggage which came with Puritans to Massachusetts Bay in 1630,” and says the colony followed the example of 1 Corinthians (14:35), “And if they (women) will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home” (13). The result was that it was left to families to give their daughters the education their sons received from the community.

The danger educated women posed to the established order was also shown in the “heresy” of Anne Hutchison, who taught that individuals could interpret the Bible on their own, and was thus excommunicated and banished from Massachusetts in 1638. This theme was revisited in the Salem witch trials of the 1650’s and 1660’s, and in later witchcraft scares in New England in the 1690’s. (Riley 21 - 22)

Two sisters, Jane and Abigail Coleman, did speak out on the need for education for women in the early eighteenth century (and were later immortalized by Mary Alice Baldwin.) In 1722, the twenty year-old Jane Coleman wrote of her desire to emulate, and surpass, the achievements of women scholars before her.

Come now, fair muse, and fill my empty mind,
With rich ideas, great and unconfin’d
O let me burn with *Sappho*’s noble Fire,
But not like her for faithless man expire. (qtd. in Kerber 21-22)

While the Colemans proved women of the time were reading works other than fiction, they were also branded as trouble-makers and used as examples of danger of educating women, proving, according to Kerber, “that women faced severe criticism when they ventured away from household matters” (Kerber 22).

Throughout the eighteenth century, women’s education was promoted only on the grounds of its usefulness to society: women were to be educated so they could fill their proper functions as wife and mother. Nancy Wolloch writes that “until the last decades of the eighteenth century, girls’ education, when available at all, was rudimentary in nature and limited to the very well-to-do” (88).

Linda Kerber calls the period between the founding of the nation and 1833 (when the first college opportunities opened for women) the “Era of the Great Debate over the Capacities of Women’s Minds” (20). In 1792 Mary Wollstonecraft penned A Vindication of the Rights of Women, in which she decried an education system that left women in a “state of perpetual childhood.” She made no doubt as to her aims for women, writing, “I wish to persuade women to endeavor to acquire strength, both of mind and body” (11). Her reading of the history of women’s education had produced unhappy findings, and unhappy feelings:

After considering the historic page, and viewing the living world with anxious solicitude, the most melancholy emotions of sorrowful indignation have depressed my spirits [...] I have turned over various books written on the subject of education, and patiently observed the conduct of parents and the management of schools; but what has been the result? - a profound conviction that the neglected education of my fellow-creatures is the grand source of the misery I deplore; and that women, in particular, are rendered weak and wretched by a variety of concurring causes [...] one cause of this

barren blooming I attribute to a false system of education, gathered from books written on this subject by men. (9)

She took direct aim at the arguments against women's education which claimed it would masculinize women or lead them to neglect their "womanly role:"

An active mind embraces the whole circle of its duties, and finds time enough for all. It is not, I assert, a bold attempt to emulate masculine virtues; it is not the enchantment of literary pursuits, or the steady investigation of scientific subjects, that leads women astray from duty. No, it is indolence and vanity - the love of pleasure and the love of sway, that will reign paramount in an empty mind. I say empty emphatically, because the education which women now receive scarcely deserves the name. (194)

Linda Kerber writes of the impact of Wollstonecraft, "In the early eighteenth century there had only been one respectable position on the subject; by the end of the century [...] there were at least two. Mary Wollstonecraft's arguments had been taken by at least one portion of the community to reflect the common sense of the matter [...] In a few quarters, visions of women's education enlarged [...] the strict limits on what a girl might learn were weakening" (Kerber 31).

Beginning in 1787 the Philadelphia Young Ladies Academy offered a complete academic program for girls, and similar academies quickly sprung up in many New England towns. By the turn of the century they had spread throughout the new nation. As Wolloch points out, these academies were run and financed by men, and "reflected the ideals of these well-off fathers" (89).

Wolloch writes that, "female education also served as the crux of a new eruption of raised expectations" (91). Sally Schwager notes that this was not what the men who

opened them had in mind. “The culture of the republican girls’ academies, then, may have fostered qualities in women that their founders never anticipated – independence, ambition, and public leadership [...] The academy experience [...] highlighted the central paradox in women’s educational history – that education for women served the conservative function of preserving dominant cultural values of domesticity and subservience, while at the same time it provided women with the skills, the insights, and the desire to advance nontraditional values and, in some cases, even radical change.” (163-164)

Ladies Magazine, founded in 1828 “became a chronicle of women’s education” (Wolloch 104). But its founder Sarah Hale, while a staunch fighter for women’s education, also stated that women “should solicit education as a favor, not demand it as a right” (qtd. in Wolloch, 105).

Francis Wright also attempted to address what she called the “neglected state of women’s minds” (qtd. in Wolloch 166), and was harshly criticized. She founded the gazette *The Free Enquirer*, and in 1829 embarked on a lecture tour speaking on feminism and working class issues, including universal education. This led to education organizations known as Fanny Wright Societies. (Martin 199) Like Wollstonecraft, Wright ties women’s subordination to their lack of education. (200) Wright also attacked the idea that knowledge and truth are dangerous. (201) According to O’Barr, “Through her experiments in residential communities as well as public calls to action, Fanny Wright provides one example of the women who articulated the missing pieces in this revolutionary experiment” (80).

The growing idea that education was acceptable for women influenced women who did not get formal education. As Linda Kerber writes, “In a world in which only a few thousand women were in college or university in any given year, most ‘higher’ education was necessarily self-education” (35). Many women read on their own, and what they read said a lot about both their sense of history, and their sense of themselves, as evidenced in an example from Kerber: In Jane Austen’s Northanger Abbey, a woman expresses her preference for novels over male history by saying history is “The quarrels of popes and kings, with wars or pestilence’s, in every page; the men all so good for nothing, and hardly any women at all” (qtd. in Kerber, 34).

Women also encountered problems while attempting to expand formal education to black women. In 1833 Lydia Marie Child published a pamphlet An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans, and consequently had her membership to the Boston Atheneum revoked. The same year Quaker teacher Prudence Campbell admitted a black woman to her academy in Connecticut, only to have all of the white women withdraw. When she then attempted to run the school as an academy for black women, she was arrested, her school was vandalized, and she fled to the West. (Wolloch 186)

Also in 1833, Lucretia Mott, published her “Discourse on Women.” Her language made it clear she was not seeking education as a favor. (Mott 59) In the 1830’s women made their entrance into higher education at Oberlin College. The reason behind their appearance, however, was not necessarily to help women, instead, it was hoped the presence of women would civilize the behavior of the male students. Women were granted specialized degrees after taking the “ladies course,” through college. (Wolloch

276) The Mount Holyoke Seminary opened in 1837 under the direction of Mary Lyon.

While enhancing the academic standards and offerings, the school still prepared women for roles in their separate sphere, which had now been enlarged as women were expected to become the teachers of the nation's youth. (Wolloch 127-128)

Catherine Beecher, who had founded a female academy in Hartford in the 1820's, published the "monumental & encyclopedic" Treatise on Domestic Economy in 1841. (Wolloch 133) Beecher's work established a new "career" for women, that of "domestic economist," based on the principle that a woman's work in the home was every bit as substantial and complicated as men's professions. Perhaps even more importantly, Beecher surmised that because of their dominance in matters at home, women therefore had the greatest influence on their children -- the children of the nation -- and thus had the greatest impact on the future of the nation. While this increased credit for the importance of women's traditional role was popular with many, Beecher's belief that women should stay in the "domestic and social circle" because of their "subordinate relation in society to the other sex" mortified others such as Angelina Grimke, who felt women should be free to exercise influence in the same way as men if they so chose. (Wolloch 188)

Women's history, which had begun to be researched in the early 1800's, was beginning to be taught to women along with more traditional subjects. One of the first was Child's A History of the Condition of Women in Various Ages and Conditions. According to Kerber, these histories "linked girls to heroic women of the past and attempted, however hesitantly, to provide for women a place in the civic culture, eroding the antique barriers between the world of men and the world of women" (Kerber 34).

Other institutions appeared around the country between the 1830's and 1860's. Wolloch reports that by the mid-1800's all states had at least some sorts of institutions for "advanced" study. She also notes a very important aspect of the academies, that they "provided a crucial experience in the lives of its middle-class students, an interlude in which they spent a few years in the company of peers" (Wolloch 129). Sisterhood was making an appearance in academia.

In 1845 another tract which would become a feminist classic was penned, Margaret Fuller's Woman in the Nineteenth Century. Fuller's expansive book dealt not only with women's oppression, but their successes in fighting this oppression. She made note of the importance of newly emerging role models and women scholars and of the new world women would inhabit if they were allowed to develop their full potential. (94) She directly ref

Fuller addressed the history of men's education of women, saying that men "educated Woman more as a servant than a daughter, and found himself a king without a queen" (170). Like Women's Studies scholars more than a century later, Fuller is not only concerned with who is taught, but who is teaching, what they are teaching, and how they are teaching. On this point she is unequivocal, and makes an open call for the education of women by women,

I believe that, at present, women are the best helpers of one another. Let them think; let them act; till they know what they need. We only ask of men to remove arbitrary barriers. Some would like to do more. But I believe it needs that Woman show herself in her native dignity, to teach them how to aid her; their minds are so encumbered by tradition. (172)

Another boost to women's education was provided by a vast teaching shortage which existed by the 1850's, and ensured that women would have to be educated in order

to teach a the growing population of male students. Park surmises, “It was not therefore the arguments for women’s education on the grounds of fairness or equality which prevailed at mid-century, but ironically the economic and political need of the country, which nevertheless continued to exclude most women from political and economic decisions” (18).

The Morrill Act, giving congressional funding to higher education, also helped co-education. By 1867 twenty-two co-educational institutions existed, many admitting women not for their influence but for their tuition payments. (Wolloch 276-277) This was only the beginning. Linda Kerber writes that “The 1870’s were something of a ‘takeoff decade for co-educational, especially public, institutions” (38).

But despite the support of activists such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who believed they could help reach a feminist goal of “more congenial marriages,” co-educational colleges did not gain wide popularity. (Wolloch 277) Instead, the all-woman institution would offer women “a separate sphere in higher education, one where women were in control and where women could be employed” (Wolloch 277).

Vassar had opened in 1861, followed by Wellesley and Smith in 1875, and Bryn Mawr in 1884. Bryn Mawr’s M. Carey Thomas flatly reversed Sara Hale’s earlier dictum, believing that at women’s colleges, “everything exists for women students and is theirs by right not by favor” (Wolloch 277). The first in the South, Mississippi State College for Women, opened in 1885. (Kerber 29) Early catalogs from Smith College, founded by Sophia Smith, also explicitly rejected educating women for a separate sphere with the words, “The College is not intended to fit women for a particular sphere or profession but

to perfect her intellect by the best methods which philosophy and experience suggest” (qtd. in Park, 21). The curriculum at these schools often matched those at the best men’s schools, and also included vigorous health and physical education training. Equally important, it offered a familial environment: according to Wolloch, the women’s college experience “provided community, sorority, identity, and purpose. It instilled vigor, enthusiasm, and confidence” (279). This would have a lasting effect on women like Jane Addams, who would attempt to recreate the atmosphere later in the Settlement House movement.

Addams attended the Rockford Academy in Illinois from 1877 to 1881, where she excelled as a student leader and “reveled in the identity, activity, and community it provided” (Wolloch 254). After becoming despondent that she was not putting her education to use, a trip to Toynbee Hall in London where young radical university men were attempted to bridge the gap between social classes inspired Addams to opened Hull-House in Chicago with the help of the Chicago Woman’s Club in 1889. It was the beginning of a successful movement. After the turn of the century, women’s clubs and settlement houses became centers of feminist activity. While based more in activism than academics, the movement would espouse goals for women which would be echoed later in the century by women’s studies advocates: as one clubwoman put in 1904, these women were putting aside the traditional study of works by men, and beginning to “proceed in earnest to contemplate our own social order” (Wolloch 255).

While Addams had found a very special niche, she worried about the futures of other college-educated women who were not being provided outlets to apply this

newfound intellect. Again espousing a theme that would be later echoed by Women's Studies advocates, she worried that these schools were educating the mind at the expense of the heart, causing women to lose their innate ability to feel. (Wolloch 255)

Glenda Riley has noted that these women's colleges left unanswered the question "whether to perpetuate domestic ideas and beliefs or to break with them" (183).

Relationships with men were also a part of this problem for some college-educated women at the time. A Radcliffe graduate from 1900 wrote in 1910, "I hang in a void midway between two spheres. A professional career puts me beyond reach of the average woman's duties and pleasures, but the conventional limitations of the female lot put me beyond the reach of the average man's duties and pleasures" (qtd. in Riley, 184)

Wolloch sums up the dilemma facing these educated women, "By the turn of the century, 85,000 young women attended college, but their higher education, Addams felt, tended to bury them 'beneath mere mental accumulation' without preparing them 'in the line of action.' Few would be able, as [Addams] had done, to transform a personal problem into a public solution" (268).

The feminist movement of the 1910's which culminated in the suffragettes victory with the 19th Amendment, also carried over into higher education. The percentage of doctoral degrees granted to women rose from 10% to 15% between the years of 1910 and 1920. During the same time, the percentage of female faculty at colleges jumped from 19 to 30%. (Wolloch 393)

This period would also lead to another great advance in women's education, but one which would not be led from the campus, but from the streets, born out of the politics

of radical socialism. Beginning in 1912, Margaret Sanger began the fight to give women perhaps the most important and controversial personal information they could have, information on how to control their own reproductive systems.

Sanger believed birth control would change sex from a purely procreative act to “a psychic and spiritual avenue of expression” (Wolloch 381). But some women saw a negative side to this, as a California feminist remarked in 1916, she feared “more and more intercourse until life would consist of nothing else” (Wolloch 375). In fact, the 1920’s would be a time of sexual liberation in America, when the “flapper” would become the stereotype for American women; the arguments still continue about the effect of this revolution on women. According to Wolloch, the campus coed of the 1920’s was “now imbued more with hopes of marriage than with a sense of mission” (383).

Women entering college seeking to become wives could take a course of study designed to help them after reaching this goal. Domestic science and home economics had become a standard part of the curriculum of women’s education in the late 1800’s, including higher education. Wolloch writes that “High schools began to teach home economics, while college students could study chemistry, hygiene, domestic science, and psychology” (293). Around the turn of the century colleges started departments and degree programs under the headings of Domestic Science and Home Economics. (Wolloch 295)

The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 had funded Home Economics at state universities. While the numbers of women (and men) in colleges had soared, the purpose of education for women had drastically changed. Wolloch writes of this change, “Unlike women’s

schools of the 1890's, the colleges now produced housewives rather than moral leaders" (406). Women's colleges were not immune to this change. Vassar's interdisciplinary School of Euthenics, established in 1925, taught courses such as "Husband and Wife," and "Motherhood." (Wolloch 406)

The sexual revolution of the 1920's led some educators to believe that parents were no longer capable of preparing their children for issues such as dating, premarital sex, and unwed pregnancies. The result was that in the 1930's courses on marriage and the family began to proliferate. However, most of these classes and research focused narrowly on issues pertaining to the Anglo middle- and upper-classes. (Riley 268)

The success of the suffragette movement along with new opportunities, educational and otherwise, for women made it easier younger women to get an education, but harder to identify with the struggles of their recent foremothers. Alice Duer Miller issued a simple reminder to students, one that would later be given by academic women who had participated in the revolutions of the 1960's and 70's, "Never forget how many people have broken their hearts to get your college for you" (qtd. in Kerber, 40).

Despite some setbacks for women, there was still progress. The number of female faculty and doctorates awarded to women continued to grow throughout the decade, and some women were making changes and challenges to academia. A coterie of women were making their mark on fields in behavioral sciences. Wolloch remarked on the links that were created between different generations of women, "These anthropologists, psychologists, and social scientists were linked to pioneers of earlier generations, just as they became involved in the careers of women scholars of the next one" (393). The

scholars had a deep impact, as they “questioned traditional assumptions about sex differences, stressed the impact of cultural conditioning,” and according to Rosalind Rosenberg, “formulated theories ... that affected the whole course of American social science” (qtd. in Wolloch, 393). Columbia University featured two prominent graduate students, Margaret Mead and Zora Neale Hurston. (Wolloch 393) Mead would help break new ground in Anthropology, and Hurston’s methods of going back to get stories and information at the grass-roots level would later be emulated by generations of women’s and ethnic studies students.

Women continued to maintain a high presence on campuses in the 1930’s. While the percentage of high school graduates and college undergraduates who were female and doctorates awarded to women were leveling off, the percentage of degrees granted to women and female faculty stayed high. However, this would change in the 1940’s as the GI Bill dramatically increased percentage of 18 to 21 year olds in college, from 15% to 27%, but most of new students were male. By 1950 female representation had dropped at every stage: the percentage of undergraduates who were female dropped from 40% to 30%, the lowest since 1880; the percentage of bachelor’s degrees granted to women plummeted from 41% to 24%; and the percentage of female doctorates and faculty members also fell. (Wolloch 587)

Besides this drop in the percentage of women in college, there was a equally precipitous drop in campus activism on women’s issues, as Park describes,

The wars had resulted in the collapse of empires and in the rise of the power of the organized working class. So far as the settled middle-class from which most women college students came was concerned, these

revolutions were adequate, and there was no urge to press for a reassessment of the proper place of women, particularly since in America this group enjoyed the highest level of security and luxury any women had ever attained in history. (23)

Another problem was beginning to emerge by the early 1940's, although it would not be pointed out by researchers until the late 1950's, when a long survey of Smith College graduates from 1942 revealed that while nearly 90% of the women were now housewives with children, 80% of these women regretted not using their education in professional work. The researcher had hoped to disprove the idea that education was not healthy for women; after the research she believed the problems were not caused by education, but by "not planning to put it to serious use" (qtd. in Wolloch, 485). The researcher was herself in this predicament, as she describes,

I first gave up a psychology fellowship and then even newspaper reporting jobs. I lived the life of the suburban housewife that was everyone's dream at the time [...] I could sense no purpose in my own life...(qtd. in Wolloch, 485)

Deeper research revealed that this problem of dissatisfaction with the American Dream life as a housewife, this "problem with no name," was unsettlingly common among middle-class American women. Having discovered and identified the problem, the intrepid researcher gave it a name, "The Feminine Mystique," and when she wrote a book with this title in 1963, Betty Friedan helped unleash the next wave of feminism.

Unfortunately, the first response after discovery of the feminine mystique was to discriminate further against women, as Friedan noted,

A number of educators suggested seriously that women no longer be admitted to the four year colleges and universities: in the growing college

crisis, the education which girls could not use as housewives was more urgently needed than ever by boys to do the work of the atomic age.” (58)

However, in 1963 the President’s Commission on the Status of Women, which had been created by John Kennedy and chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt endorsed giving women better access to education. (Riley 312)

But this idea was still not catching on with many, as pointed out by Cynthia Ozick in 1965’s “The Demise of the Dancing Dog.” (The title was based on the comments of Samuel Johnson that a woman speaking was like a dog dancing: you don’t care how well it is done, it is just amazing that it is done at all.)

The idea of an educated woman is not yet taken seriously in American Universities. She is not chased off campus, she is even welcomed there – but she is not taken seriously as a student, and she will not be welcomed if she hopes to return as a serious lifelong scholar. (198)

But women on both sides of the Atlantic were beginning to see that if progress was to be made, it would have to begin with women’s education. In 1966 Juliet Mitchell wrote “Women: The Longest Revolution,” printed in New Left Review, Great Britain.

The whole pyramid of discrimination rests on a solid extra-economic foundation – education. The demand for equal work, in Britain, should above all take the form of a demand for an *equal educational system*, since this is at present the main single filter selecting women for inferior work roles [...] Education is probably the key area for immediate economic advance at present. (210)

When the National Organization for Women (NOW) was founded in the US in 1967 its Statement of Purpose included the importance of education to women’s rights:

WE BELIEVE that it is as essential for every girl to be educated to her full potential of human ability as it is for every boy – with the knowledge that such education is the key to effective participation in today’s economy and that, for a girl as for a boy, education can only be serious when there is an expectation that it will be used in society. We believe that American

educators are capable of devising means of imparting such expectations to girl students. Moreover, we consider the decline in the proportion of women receiving higher and professional education to be evidence of discrimination. This discrimination may take the form of quotas against the admission of women to colleges and professional schools; lack of encouragement by parents, counselors, and educators; denial of loans or fellowships; or the traditional or arbitrary procedures in graduate and professional training geared in terms of men, which inadvertently discriminate against women. We believe that the same serious attention must be given to high school dropouts who are girls as to boys. (100-101)

In 1970 Bernice Sandler testified before the New York City Commission on Human Rights on “Patterns of Discrimination and Discouragement in Higher Education.” She outlined the problems women were still facing:

Half of the brightest people in our country – half of the most talented people with the potential for the highest intellectual endeavor – are women. Yet these gifted women will find it very difficult to obtain the same kind of quality education that is so readily available to their brothers. These women will encounter discrimination after discrimination – not once, not twice, but time after time in the very academic institutions which claim to preach the tenets of democracy and fair play.

These gifted women will face official and unofficial quotas at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. They will face discrimination when they apply for scholarship aid and financial assistance. When they graduate, their own university placement service will discriminate against them in hiring [...] (384)

But while higher education continued to be an unfriendly place for women, hope had appeared on the horizon. Growing out of the social movements of the 1960's, a new entry to academia held the promise of destroying the “master's house” from the inside. The battleground had changed from arguing whether women should be taught, to how and what they should be taught. The field of Women's Studies had been born, and the blend of academics, sisterhood, and activism which had been dreamed of by many, but was practically available to only a few, would now be made available to legions of college

women. In turn, these women and their radical redefinition of the subject matter, would forever change academia, and the world.

CHAPTER III

A HERSTORY OF WOMEN'S STUDIES

“The development of Women’s Studies reflects one of the main concerns of the women’s movement not to have the material, political and spiritual culture of women any longer deleted from the records kept by men.” (Thompson 108)

The affluence and idealism of the mid-1960’s sent young women to college in much greater numbers. As they became involved in the civil rights and other student movements of the day they also noticed that they were still being treated as second-class citizens, not only in the mainstream society, but inside the protest movements themselves. (Boxer 25) A common story of the period was that of supposedly radical men sitting in the front room making strategy while sending the women into the back to make coffee.

In 1965 the “Free University” of Seattle began offering non-traditional courses as sort of a testing ground for subjects left out of the mainstream curriculum. In 1966 courses on women were taught by Cathy Cade and Peggy Dobbins at the New Orleans Free School, Naomi Wassein at University of Chicago, and Annette Baxter at Barnard. (Boxer “For and About Women” 71) By 1969 idealism and activism had encouraged women’s caucuses in many academic fields to begin pushing for inclusion.

In September of 1970 San Diego State University became the first university in the nation to officially sanction Women's Studies, funding one and a half positions in the new field and instituting a ten course curriculum. (Boxer 8) Splits between activism and academics appeared almost immediately. In the first year, the community activists in the program left over funding and control issues and moved off campus to start the Center for Women's Studies and Services. (Boxer 164)

Betty Friedan accurately predicted "women's studies will one day fill libraries and create whole new courses in psychology, sociology, and history" (qtd. in Boxer 8). However, traditional academics disagreed. Marilyn Boxer reported that in 1972, when the chair of her history department heard she was writing her dissertation on a topic in women's history, he warned her to hurry and finish, before the fad had passed and she would have trouble finding work. (Boxer 8-9)

In 1971 Shelia Tobias published Female Studies I, which contained syllabi of the seventeen courses taught or proposed during 1969-70. (Boxer 8) The syllabi proved that Women's Studies courses were already more inclusive than most university curriculum. Seven contained readings specifically about women of color, many others dealt with class issues. (Boxer 12) Tobias called for "Female Studies" at Cornell, arguing that it was analogous to Black Studies. Cornell became the second university to establish a program, in 1970-71. Also in 1970, the Union Institute in Cincinnati added an emphasis in Women's Studies to its Interdisciplinary Program. George Washington University offered a MA in Women's Studies in 1972. (Boxer 10)

The women in these programs and elsewhere were networking at a furious pace. By 1971 there had been 14 regional conferences. (Boxer 10) The courses had also generated immediate student interest. By the end of 1972, a US Department of Education longitudinal study showed 6% of students had earned some credit in Women's Studies. (Boxer 27)

Bonnie Zimmerman, then a graduate student at SUNY Buffalo, and later head of Women's Studies at San Diego State, wrote of the effect of these early years and the scholarship they produced:

No body of literature will ever have as strong an impact on my ideas as that produced in the first few years (roughly 1968 through 1972) of the women's liberation movement. Everything we have written since has been a refinement, development, refutation, or reconfiguration of the concepts developed in that pioneering literature [...] The generation of feminists that produced these texts - 'my' generation - were pioneers. Although isolated individuals preceded us, the wave of political and intellectual activism that began in the late 1960's was one of the great movements of the century. We broke new ground in virtually every area of society. We took risks and created dazzlingly new ideas and interpretations [...] We believed that we were stripping away the lies and myths of the past to reveal the 'real truth' about women and lesbians. We were sweeping the house clean...(qtd. in Boxer, 171)

Not content just to add women to the Western canon, one of the first things the Women's Studies pioneers wanted to sweep away was the inherent bias contained in what was being taught as "objective" knowledge. Dale Spender explains that:

Women came to realise that the knowledge which men constructed about women [...] was frequently rated as 'objective' while the knowledge women began to construct about women [...] was frequently rated as 'subjective'. (qtd. in Thompson, 16)

British women's studies scholar Jane Thompson wrote that,

The root of the problem lies in the fact that white, middle and upper-class men devised and fashioned an economic system which...suited their purposes and reflected their values...and passed it off as a world view which encapsulated all human experience and which has become widely held to be objective, immutable, and true. (31)

To many academics, this was heresy. Patrice McDermott writes that feminist thinking challenged

[...] one of the most deeply engrained assumptions of American public discourse: the liberal idea of value-free knowledge [...] by arguing that knowledge is not a monolithic truth[...but is...] always situated in the material world, and involved in distributions of power. (672-673)

One of the measures of the success that these pioneers had in illuminating the situation is that by the 1990's Women's Studies students, not just scholars and theoreticians, were speaking out against the stacked deck they faced. The words of Kat Turner echoed those of her foremothers in Women's Studies:

It never fails to amaze me what a beautiful setup patriarchy is, a perfect circle that is extremely tough to break. Men establish that they are superior, and they convince women of this fact. They take the most powerful jobs and the highest pay, they take emotionally without giving, they are catered to and humored - and they claim this is their due because they are inherently more capable. Then, because they are in positions of power, they do research that supports their claims to superiority and natural dominance, they pass laws to ensure they retain their lofty positions, and they control the media that informs the public about this. They have successfully brainwashed women into accepting their lower positions. And women are buying it! (Obviously not all women.) Although the system sickens and depresses me, I have to give it to men for their utter ingenuity and wile. I couldn't have thought up a more self-serving system if I tried! (O'Barr & Wyer, 21)

Women's Studies scholars had successfully revealed that what had been passed off as objectivity was in fact what Adrienne Rich called "institutionalized male

subjectivity.” The result was earth-shaking, as O’Barr and Wyer describe it, “...what was once taken for granted becomes open to question” (56).

Women’s Studies advocates were not only concerned with what was being taught, but how it was being taught. They pointed out that the educational system was modeled on hierarchical structures, many taken from patriarchal religious models. The classroom setup and presentation was one example. In the traditional classroom, the teacher, usually male, would stand at the front of the class and pontificate to his students. Feminists used the analogy that the students were supposed to be empty vessels whose heads would be filled with knowledge from their professor. They strongly questioned whether this was actually learning at all, or merely rote memorization and regurgitation of facts, believing that critical thinking was the key to real understanding. They also believed that this hierarchical structure was even worse for women than men because it rewarded those students who were more argumentative or had been trained to speak up, both characteristics of male socialization. One of their proposals was to change this classroom structure and replace it with a more egalitarian structure based on a model designed by the Quakers, the hermeneutic circle, which allowed for a more free exchange of ideas.

Mary Daly wrote that “Under patriarchy Method has wiped out women’s questions so totally that even women have not been able to hear and formulate our own questions to meet our own experiences” (qtd. in Thompson, 115) But Women’s Studies was changing that, and the scholars in this new field would need a forum of their own to present and discuss women’s questions and experiences.

Academic journals would become a key place to discuss feminist ideas about academia. Feminist Studies became the first journal of Women's Studies scholarship, publishing its first volume in 1972-73. According to Boxer, it was "generally considered more open to diverse types of scholarship..." than journals that followed, such as Signs. (Boxer 16) Rachel Blau DuPlessis, a doctoral student at Columbia, helped draft its statement of purpose, which described a thoroughly activist form of academics,

[...] the study of women is more than a compensatory project. Instead, feminism has the potential fundamentally to reshape the way we view the world. We wish not just to reinterpret women's experiences but to change women's condition. (qtd. in Boxer, 169)

In 1973 Jean O'Barr, an Africanist professor at Duke University went to her department chair to propose teaching a course on third world women. She describes what happened and the lessons she drew from it:

The chairperson looked at me as if I was from another planet and announced that the only way new courses entered the curriculum was when a distinguished research literature on the subject existed. I thought about the piles of mimeographed papers on the floor of my study at home. I looked at him and surprised even myself by confidently asserting that there was now an extensive literature in existence on the subject of Third World women and development. One might say I told a bald-faced lie. The few feminist scholars in the field were scrambling to locate reliable studies and formulate a research agenda. But he never questioned me, assuming I must know what I was talking about, and said, 'yes, of course, then we ought to have the course.' And we have ever since. I learned, in a split second, the necessity of claiming knowledge if women are to become empowered and to effect change. (95)

O'Barr believes this is an important model for the future, advising

We need to look around ourselves, remember our own experiences, document as much as we can through other sources, and say what we think. We created the record as we lived it; now we need to claim and interpret that record in order that the

spaces which we have begun to create can exert an increasingly transformative force upon the institutions in which they are located. (95)

However, the institutions would also exert their own forces onto Women's Studies. In 1973-74 the new dean at San Diego State attempted to make the program conform to university procedures, including methods of appointments. The faculty, all new that year, resigned en masse. Their fears and feelings would echo those of many to follow. As Boxer writes,

In their view, the administrations decision to cease 'rubber stamping' their hiring decisions destroyed their ability to be accountable to their own principles and to their advisory group of community members. Their collective decision-making and teaching practices would be replaced, they believed, by 'professionalism,' and career interest would overcome political commitment. (164)

In a twelve page statement, "Women's Studies and Socialist Feminism," they spoke of the inherent problems of working inside the university system,

In the three years of this Women's Studies Program we found that the university not only absorbs our struggles, our ideas, but it absorbs us [...] It prevents us from raising important political issues on the campus at large that relate to women. The incredible paper work and bureaucracy [...] works to bog us down into the structure of the university and make us lose sight of our original struggles and demands. This form of bureaucratic bullshit (BB) keeps us from initiating struggle. If we do a lot of BB we can maintain the program, if we don't we lose it. (qtd. in Boxer, 165)

In light of this dilemma, some programs, such as the one at San Francisco State, chose not to institutionalize. (Boxer 166) For those that did institutionalize, this problem would be an ever-present part of the struggle.

While problems with bureaucracy were surfacing, feminist scholarship was expanding, creating what Boxer termed a "knowledge explosion." She described the

groundbreaking work of the pioneers, writing, “They have created what is arguably the most expansive new field of knowledge in higher education of our era” (Boxer 18). By 1975 there were 150 Women’s Studies programs. (Boxer 10)

1975 was also notable for the appearance of another journal, Signs. Founding editor Catherine Stimpson called it a journal for “new scholarship on women.” It has become perhaps the foremost feminist journal, sometimes the only feminist journal given academic credibility at university libraries. (Boxer 15). Boxer calls it the “most scholarly and prestigious journal in the field” (176).

A third journal, Frontiers, would also appear, focusing attention on women of color, in the United States and elsewhere, and rural women in the U.S. (Boxer 16) According to Boxer, it is “most immediately concerned with bridging academic and community based feminism” (176). She goes on to say, “This is feminist action through the published word” (178).

Also in 1975, the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education released a report that was highly critical of higher education’s treatment of women and minorities. Pifer and Russell summed up the report,

Policies in employment, promotion, and pay have been discriminatory, leaving it to the federal government to generate reform that higher education has not developed on its own. Not only has higher education been caught in a morally and legally indefensible position, but said the council, it has also failed its own principles of finding merit wherever it could be found and rewarding it. Further, it has impoverished its own performance by the neglect of large pools of potential academic performance. (167)

1976 saw the publication of “Seven Years Later,” a report based on a study of 15 Women’s Studies programs by Florence Howe. The report noted that Women’s Studies programs had not lost their political agenda, their relationships with communities, or their emphasis on advising students and helping with careers. Women’s Studies programs had become “intellectual and physical places to explore questions of praxis” (qtd. in O’Barr, 99).

In 1977 the Combahee River Collective released a “Black Feminist Statement,” in which women of color expressed their concerns that Women’s Studies was making some of the same mistakes made by other progressive groups in the 1960’s concerning a lack of inclusiveness. Women being left out of the agenda of earlier groups had led them to form a movement of their own. Now many women of color felt that they had been left off of the agenda of white feminists, and believed they should form a movement of their own.

In 1977 the National Women’s Studies Association was founded in San Francisco to act as an umbrella organization for the prolific number of Women’s Studies programs. There were also beginning to be changes in the nature of Women’s Studies programs. In 1978 Signs reported that while at Women’s Studies inception “attitude and behavior change was of primary concern while intellectual acquisition and mastery of knowledge were secondary issues,” acceptance of the ideas of the women’s movement had led instructors to now push for intellectual mastery. (qtd. in Boxer, 171)

Jean O’Barr noted that the most frequently used metaphor of Women’s Studies in the 1970’s was “making the invisible visible - seeing women who had always existed but whose history and experiences had been ignored in presenting the human story” (103). By

1980 the number of institutions of higher education which offered these valuable programs had risen to three hundred. (Boxer 10) Many of these programs were now delving deeper into the mainstream curriculum, not content to simply make women visible, they also succeeded in illuminating multiple layers of discrimination, or a “hidden curriculum.” Julia Wood writes of this less overt form of discrimination:

The Hidden Curriculum consists of institutional organization, content, and teaching styles that reflect gender stereotypes and have the effect of sustaining gender inequities by privileging white males and marginalizing and devaluing female and minority students. (207)

1981 saw the publication of This Bridge Called My Back, a work focusing on relationships between women, specifically the feeling of many women of color that the feminist movement had ignored them or treated them as second-class citizens. The book contained writings by many of the most influential women of color, including the “Black Feminist Statement” issued by the Combahee River Collective. The original letter soliciting writings was sent out in 1979:

We want to express to all women - especially to white middle-class women - the experiences which divide us as feminists; we want to examine incidents of intolerance, prejudice and denial of differences within the feminist movement. We intend to explore the causes and sources of, and solutions to these divisions. We want to create a definition that expands what ‘feminist’ means to us. (Moraga and Anzaldua xxiii)

The opening of Donna Kate Rushin’s “The Bridge Poem,” explained the position women of color felt they had been put in:

I’ve had enough
I’m sick of seeing and touching
Both sides of things
Sick of being the damn bridge for everybody

Nobody
Can talk to anybody
Without me
Right?

I explain my mother to my father my father to my little sister
My little sister to my brother my brother to the white feminists
The white feminists to the Black church folks the Black church folks
To the ex-hippies the ex-hippies to the Black separatists the
Black separatists to the artists the artists to my friends' parents...

Then
I've got to explain myself
To everybody

I do more translating
Than the Gawdamn U.N.

Forget it
I'm sick of it

I'm sick of filling in your gaps

Sick of being your insurance against
The isolation of your self-imposed limitations
Sick of being the crazy one at your holiday dinners
Sick of being the odd one at your Sunday Brunches
Sick of being the sole Black friend to 34 individual white people
(Moraga and Anzaldua xxi)

This was a main theme that came out of the writings: women of color were tired of being asked to educate white women. Judit Moschkovich wrote "We've heard it all before: *it is not the duty of the oppressed to educate the oppressor*" (79). She had an answer to the request she often heard

'Teach me everything you know.' Latin American women write books, music, etc. A great deal of information about Latin American women is readily available in most libraries and bookstores. I say: *read and listen*. We may, then, have something to share. (79-80)

Cherrie Moraga echoed the same theme saying, “What each of us needs to do about what we don’t know is to go look for it” (72).

Audre Lorde also addressed this theme in “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House:”

[...] as Adrienne Rich pointed out in a recent talk, white feminists have educated themselves about such an enormous amount over the past ten years, how come you haven’t also educated yourself about black women and the differences between us - black and white - when it is key to our survival as a movement? [...] Now we hear that it is the task of black and third world women to educate white women, in the face of tremendous resistance, as to our existence, our differences, our relative roles in our joint survival. This is a diversion of energies and a tragic repetition of patriarchal thought. (100)

Lorde further addressed the theme of difference, writing:

If white American feminist theory need not deal with the differences between us, and the resulting difference in aspects of our oppressions, then what do you do with the fact that the women who clean your houses and tend your children while you attend conferences on feminist theory are , for the most part, poor and third world women? [...] The failure of academic feminists to recognize difference as a crucial strength is a failure to reach beyond the first patriarchal lesson. Divide and conquer, in our world, must become define and empower [...] Racism and homophobia are real conditions of all our lives in this place and time. *I urge each one of us here to reach down into that deep place of knowledge inside herself and touch that terror and loathing of any difference that lives there. See whose face it wears.* Then the personal as political can begin to illuminate all our choices. (“Masters” 100-101)

In “An Open Letter to Mary Daly,” Lorde gave a straight-to-the-point example of the differing levels of oppression faced by women of color, writing, “The white women with hoods on in Ohio handing out KKK literature on the street may not like what you have to say, but they will shoot me on sight” (97).

Mitsuye Yamada spoke of a woman who heard her poem, "To a Lady," (which presented her anger with the treatment of minorities in the feminist movement) and asked Yamada why she was "wallowing in the past." Yamada responded "This poem *is not* at all about the past. I am talking about what is happening to us right now...about not seeing the connections between racism and sexism in our lives" (74). The dismissal of their concerns by white feminists had led to an almost complete fissure, as Lorde reminded Daly, "Should the next step be war between us, or separation? Assimilation within a solely western-european herstory is not acceptable" (96).

Despite the anger it contained, Lorde's letter to Daly also showed that women of color were still willing to enter into a dialogue with their white sisters who were willing to listen, as Lorde wrote near the close:

I had decided never again to speak to white women about racism. I felt it was wasted energy, because of their destructive guilt and defensiveness, and because whatever I had to say might better be said by white women to one another, at far less emotional cost to the speaker, and probably with a better hearing. This letter attempts to break this silence. (97)

The introduction to the second edition written by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua explained that the book had become a "Living Entity:"

What began as a reaction to the racism of white feminists soon became a positive affirmation of the commitment of women of color to our *own* feminism. Mere words on a page began to transform themselves into a living entity within our guts. Now, over a year later, feeling greater solidarity with other feminists of color across the country through the making of this book, we assert:

This Bridge Called My Back intends to reflect an uncompromising definition of feminism by women of color in the U.S.

We named this anthology "radical" for we were interested in the writings of women of color who want nothing short of a revolution in the hands of women - who agree that that *is* the goal, no matter how we might

disagree about the getting there or the possibility of seeing it in our own lifetimes. (xxiv)

The book resonated with many women who read it. Editor Gloria Anzaldua received a letter from a nineteen-year old Puerto Rican woman named Alma Ayala, who told her of the book:

The woman writers seemed to be speaking to me, and they actually understood what I was going through. Many of you put into words feelings I have had that I had no way of expressing [...] the writings justified some of my thoughts telling me I had a right to feel as I did. It is remarkable to me that one book could have such an impact. So many feelings were brought alive inside me. (1st page, Foreword to Second Edition)

In the early 1980's problems revealed by women of color were beginning to be addressed. In 1982 Clark Atlanta University offered the first Doctor of Arts degree in Africana Women's Studies. (Boxer 43) 1983 saw the first publication of Sage: A Scholarly Journal on Black Women.

By 1985 the number of Women's Studies programs in America had risen to four hundred and fifty. (Boxer 10) The progression of feminist scholarship was also producing changes. According to O'Barr,

In the 1980's scholars in women's studies began to replace the sight metaphor with a metaphor emphasizing voice. They began to realize that unless women were talking and being talked about women could not bring about the institutional transformations they sought. These scholars began to talk about students, especially female students, gaining a voice to articulate their positions, their educational needs, and their goals as they understood them. (103)

Women's Studies scholars were formulating specific remedies to correct the unequal representation of women in academia. By 1988 Peggy McIntosh was advocating

“Interactive Phases of Curricular Re-vision,” and teaching this process to colleges and universities across the country. McIntosh identified five phases through which this re-vision would progress. The first was the “Womanless History,” which focused only on men in positions of public power. The second, “Women in History,” enlarged the first phase only slightly by adding the study of women who held public positions. The third, “Women as Problem, Anomaly, or Absence in History,” would demand that academic disciplines recognize that they had been defining men as the “norm” and women as “deviant.” The fourth phase, “Women As History,” called on disciplines to recognize the value of the work done outside the public domain, work most often done by women. Phase five, “History Redefined or Reconstructed to Include Us All,” would take us to an inclusive curriculum which would recognize the value and contributions of all of the members of the society, not just those at the top of the hierarchy. (McIntosh 3-4)

However, while academic women were having success, there would be a backlash. In the late 1980’s an old bogey-man was revived. Historically, educated women had faced attacks on their sexuality. Early in our country’s history, the term “Bluestocking,” which originally applied to French intellectual women who advocated education for women, was reappropriated to parody women as unattractive. The idea that education would make women “repulsive to men” was one of the main early arguments against women’s education. (Wolloch 71). In 1988 the false choice between education and a husband was given credibility due to the huge press coverage of a preliminary report of a study by Neil Bennett, reporting that never married, college-educated women had almost no chance of ever getting married.

These findings were so shocking that Jeanne Moorman, a demographer for the Census Bureau's Marriage and Family statistics branch, was deluged with calls for verification by reporters. Moorman decided to try to verify these findings, but she used more conventional and proven methods, Population Census figures that surveyed 13.4 million households instead of the 60,000 used by Bennett. The results were markedly different. While Bennett's findings claimed that a 30 year-old single college-educated women had only a one in five chance of ever getting married, Moorman's more reliable study showed that figure to be closer to two in three, an increase of over 300%; Bennett's figures for these women at 35 gave them only a one in twenty chance of marriage, Moorman's showed a one in three chance, an increase of nearly 700%; and at age 40 Bennett's numbers dropped to about one in seventy-five, while Moorman's showed the figure to be one in five, or an increase of 1500%. As Susan Faludi pointed out, while experts were almost unanimous in their agreement on the lack of validity of Bennett's numbers, and even Bennett himself concluded that his preliminary findings were way off the mark, the retraction never receives as much attention as the original headline, and another long disproven myth was re-entered in the anti-education canon. (9-14)

Despite the cultural and political backlash against women in the 1980's, by 1990 programs in Women's Studies were being offered at six hundred institutions. (Boxer 10) While critics of Women's Studies and feminism had continually charged that these programs taught a rigid set of feminist beliefs, in reality Women's Studies had and continued to be one of the few academic fields in which all beliefs were subject to

question. In the 1990's, as Boxer writes, "Academic feminists published a torrent of self-criticism" (Boxer 172).

A new group of critics, who often called themselves feminists while espousing anti-feminist views, also joined the backlash. Patrice McDermott mentioned several in her work, "Cultural Criticism and Feminist Authority." One author she mentioned was Karen Lehrman, featured in a Mother Jones cover story in 1993. Lehrman charged that Women's Studies courses were "intoxicating" to the young women in the classroom, who left "programmed" (qtd. in McDermott, 668). She also was dismayed that these courses were "infected by politics" (qtd. in McDermott, 673). She took direct aim at the feminist belief that the personal is political, arguing that the "feminist dictum to transform theoretical knowledge into practical action distracts students from true intellectual benefits of liberal education" (qtd. in McDermott, 673). Apparently, to Lehrman, knowledge is only useful if it is not to be used. This is not a new position, but one which has served as the basis for the Western education system, as noted by Keith Jackson,

The problem with liberal education since the Second World War is that it has concentrated on satisfying intellectual needs alone...it has been too far removed from the processes by which ordinary men and women can meet their own collective economic and social needs. (qtd. in Thompson, 120)

Another popular anti-feminist was Christine Hoff Sommers, author of Who Stole Feminism. In her book, Sommers claimed the problems of patriarchy and oppression feminists sought to fight and change were "mythic" and had "no foundations in the facts of American life." (qtd. in McDermott, 673) In the face of a myriad of problems and issues facing women, such as the Reagan-Bush backlash against women's rights,

shrinking reproductive freedoms, ever-growing violence against women, and the still-large gap between women's and men's wages, Sommers called feminist control of the women's agenda "the crisis for women." (qtd. in McDermott, 677)

But these anti-feminists, while popular in a mainstream society which longed to send women back to their old role of suffering in silence, produced no new findings, and nothing to refute feminist proof of women's oppression. As McDermott wrote, "[...] much of what is discussed by these new critics is 'old hat' within the field [...] Problems such as victim ideology have been debated for over a decade in feminist journals, books, conferences, and classrooms." (670). She noted the critics had not "[...] offered a sustained, contextualized body of quantitative or qualitative evidence that refutes the structural power analysis produced by feminist research." (675) Instead, "[...] they are launching moral attack on feminist cultural authority." (676) It is ironic to say the least that these "new feminist critics" were now espousing the same anti-feminist vitriol that had been spouted for the previous decade by right-wing male religious leaders such as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson.

Of course men also continued their attacks. As noted by Charles Paine: "[...] people don't like to think of themselves as oppressors, and the cognitive dissonance will lead them to all sorts of strange convolutions of beliefs" (O'Barr and Wyer 50). While anti-feminist women such as Sommers, Daphne Patai and Nora Koertge all asserted that feminists were now ruling universities (McDermott 678-679), men took the hysteria a step farther. Susan Faludi noted the case of Allen Bloom, an author so self-absorbed he

compared his problem relating the horrors of being a man on a college campus as similar to Cambodian refugee trying to explain the atrocities of the Khymer Rouge. (329-332)

Male students, too, were incensed with giving credit to women. Julia Wood noted the remarks of a student named Kevin, who wrote,

I'm fed up with all this stuff in my classes that tries to convince us minorities and women did things. History is history, and science is science, and saying women did things doesn't make it so. (214)

Dale Spender says men have good reason to be threatened by woman-generated knowledge, writing that,

Once women [...] start questioning, coming up with answers, redefining and generating our own knowledge, it must irrevocably alter the relationships between men and women politically and personally. (qtd. in Thompson, 119)

The male intransigence was having an effect on women, though often it was not the one they must have hoped for. Women's Studies scholar Jane Thompson writes

The frequently held assertion that 'we must educate men,' or the naive assumption that 'if only we can find the right arguments men will come to see the justice of our cause and be persuaded' are both views which are notoriously lacking in historical precedent [...] Most men have no intention of changing the ordering of relationships or the institutional practices which have served them well [...] unless they have to. (203)

Student Michelle R. Evans agrees, writing,

We must keep focused as women and maintain verbal exchange among ourselves. I have learn do appreciate my voice, my choice to follow or refrain, my ability to relish my womanhood [...] It is not wrong to disregard men sometimes if their voices are uninformed, biased, or irrelevant. (O'Barr & Wyer, 58)

The institutionalization of Women's Studies continued its progression, reaching into the highest levels of academia as by 1994 fourteen institutions offered Master's degree programs in Women's Studies, and fifty others offered emphasis or concentrations. In addition, there were by then three interdisciplinary doctoral programs in Women's Studies, and more than twenty doctoral programs which offered minors or concentrations in Women's Studies. (Boxer 43)

Jean O'Barr proposed a new metaphor to replace the "sight" metaphor of the 1970's and the 'voice' metaphor of the 1980's.

I think the metaphor for the 1990's may well be one of listening. How do the visible, articulate women in North American society get the others in the conversation about education to listen? How do they break through the media-created stereotypes and create spaces in which different voices can be heard? A conversation requires talking and listening. Women and those in women's studies have been seen and are talking; campuses and higher education are only beginning to listen. The challenge for the 1990's will be getting heard. (103)

Inside Women's Studies, scholars on both sides of the Atlantic were continuing to push for radical change, and a link between academics and activism. In Learning Liberation, Jane Thompson wrote,

Whilst no one is suggesting that the entire apparatus of men's knowledge and the male academic tradition be discounted and dismantled, the implications of Women's Studies is that we need a radical redefinition of subject matter, different lines of enquiry, and [...] a process of learning concerned to empower women and to change fundamental attitudes and behaviors. (111)

In Women's Studies, activism and academics are a two way pipeline. Thompson wrote of "heightened female awareness about the processes of subordination as a necessary corollary to social action" (112). But student Deborah K. Chappel, remarking

on the idea that racism (and sexism) is a “social ill that can be cured with knowledge,” reminded the academics that “increased awareness without social activism for change doesn’t help at all” (qtd. in O’Barr & Wyer, 76).

Patrice McDermott warned that this commitment to social change could not be a side interest, but had to be an inherent part of Women’s Studies mission:

[...] without an explicit commitment to confront and change existing distributions of power [...] the academy and the popular press will produce a study of women that has little to do with understanding their lives and even less to do with improving the conditions in which they live. (682)

I believe that this has been and must continue to be the goal of Women’s Studies: to confront and change the academic structures that have been put in place to justify and continue the oppression of women; and to prepare students to recognize, confront, and change the societal structures which oppress women.

CHAPTER IV

PRE-HISTORY AND WOMEN'S STUDIES AT UNT UNDER THE DIRECTION OF DR. MARTHA NICHOLS

The civil rights movement of the 1960 inspired activists in and around universities to begin addressing issues left out of the traditional curriculum. In 1968 the Burning Bush Coffeehouse in Denton instituted a group of Free University classes meant to offer learning on subjects not yet in UNT's (then North Texas State University) curriculum, such as Black History. The idea was then picked up by United Campus Ministry which ran the courses over the next decade. Each semester hundreds of people would enroll in these non-credit courses: enrollment peaked around 700 in 1971. By the early 1970's many courses on women were included in the Free U. Some of the courses that were particularly popular were Consciousness Raising for Women, the Role of Black Women in America, and Women's Liberation. Other courses included Creative Dance and Quilting. These courses continued into the late 1970's.

The University's Women's Center also offered classes for women in the early 1970's, including Consciousness Raising Facilitator's Training, Assertiveness Training, Leadership Training, and Child Raising. An ad for Women's Center courses in the NT Daily on October 29, 1974 revealed a dilemma in teaching these courses for women in an academic world in which "he" was the student the university was usually concerned with.

The ad, for the women only Assertiveness Training course, said it would teach the student how to assert “himself.”

As early as 1973 the English department began trial courses including Women in 19th and 20th Century Literature. In the early 1970’s Sociology offered a course on Marriage and the Family, and the History department offered Women in US History. A Speech Communications course in Contemporary Rhetoric frequently studied the rhetoric of the Women’s Movement. Dr. Vicki Stupp taught the course and brought in speakers to address issues such as the Native American Women’s Movement. (NT Daily 2/17/76, p.1)

Women at UNT were also reaching the top levels of their academic fields. In 1975 Dr. Sigrid Olsen became head of Foreign Language. In 1976 Dr. Charldean Newell was appointed chair of Political Science. In 1977 Dr. Imogene Dickey became the head of the Drama section of Speech Communication. In addition, many North Texas faculty members were producing scholarship on women, such as Dr. Elizabeth Esterchild of Sociology’s work on non-sexist textbooks.

Women’ Studies was first approved as an official course of study and appeared in the North Texas undergraduate catalog in 1975-76 as part of a minority studies program in social sciences along with Mexican-American Studies (which was dropped in 1981) and Black Studies (which was replaced in 1979 with Asian Studies). Terry Brown, Ph.D., UNT, who was at the time a graduate student in history, was “instrumental in pushing it through.” (Dean Bell memo) Nine courses were listed under the Women’s Studies heading, including UCRS 4100, “The Role of Women.”

In 1981-82 the Women's Studies heading was removed but the UCRS course remained. The next year the UCRS course also disappeared from the catalog. In 1983-84, the list was back, as an Undergraduate Minor. The same nine courses were included: UCRS 4100, English Literature, Women in US History, three courses on Sociology of the family, two psychology courses, and one Communications course on contemporary rhetoric. A student wishing to minor in Women's Studies needed to take the UCRS course plus five of the others. (This list of courses is nearly identical to the Women's Studies listing under Interdisciplinary Minors in the 1997-98 graduate catalog, the only differences were that the Communications class was replaced by another Psychology course, and UCRS 4100 was titled "Problems and Issues in Women's Studies.")

As the country suffered through the Reagan backlash in the 1980's, Women's Studies at UNT remained static. A few courses were offered, but without any real consistency. In 1987, in response to requests from a number of graduate students in the English department, Dr. Martha Nichols was asked to teach a course in Women's Literature that could carry graduate credit. Nichols had been at UNT since 1964, while she was completing her Ph.D. in the American Romantic Movement from Tulane University, which she earned in absentia in 1968. She describes what would be a momentous event at UNT.

The chair of the English department in 1987 [Dr. James Lee] said that a number of the graduate women in the English department wanted a course in modern women's literature. He said "You're going to do it because that would fall into your area." I was the chair of a certain segment of the curriculum, and women's literature would fall into that segment. He said "If you don't do it, I'll do it." I said, "Well, I don't want you to do it, so I'll do it." (Laughter) (5)

Nichols almost had to make up the class as she went along.

There weren't very many anthologies at first that said much about women or had much about them [...] We didn't have any anthology really, for our fiction [...] so I chose very contemporary work [...] It was a course in which I had to learn as the students were learning. I guess it was one of the finest courses I ever taught because we were all working together, trying to find out what was going on. (6-7)

The course included Zora Neale Hurston, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and other writers from America, Canada, and Britain. The student response was enthusiastic, as Nichols recalled,

I remember one student after class going down the hall saying, "That's the way I'm going to teach it. That's the way I'm going to teach my women's studies courses." She was talking about sitting around and giving out topics, and everybody has something to say. I had one student to say, "Oh, I have learned how to read." In other words, she was taught to read beneath the surface. You learn to do that in feminist courses because so much is suggested but never said. She was learning to do that. (21- 22)

Nichols also noted that students were remarking on the personal impact of the class:

She said, "I have met friends that I would never have made had it not been for this course." It just sort of changed her life. I've had some comments from other students saying that they certainly had their eyes opened. One woman said that her husband, a doctor, felt that he was very pro-woman. At the end of the course, she said, "My husband is terribly anti-feminist. He just doesn't know it." But she didn't know it either at first. She said, "I don't know quite how to take this. I'll never see things the same again." I thought, "My gosh, this is a blasting of innocence." Students have really learned from these courses. (22)

Stacy Erickson, who came into UNT in 1992, was a student in some of these classes. She explains,

I don't think I really in the classroom was introduced to women's issues seriously until I came to UNT. (4) [...] I think that was the first class [Dr. Nichols course on Women Novelists] I had where we sat in a circle, and where the students sort of dominated the classroom. It was our discussion class, and I was really impressed with that. And because we had to each give oral topics on each work we read, I became more involved with the work. It was nineteenth century texts. I just gained a new enthusiasm, and read things I hadn't encountered before, new ideas. And I was really impressed with Dr. Nichols. (8)

The discussions also raised some tension inside the classroom when male students attempted to dismiss women's newfound voices, as Dr. Nichols related:

There are still women who feel that they have not been counted enough, that it is time for them to speak. That is where you get some of the hostility: "You are not going to silence me anymore. I am going to say what I want to say." We still have those arguments in class. (18)

But Nichols also mentioned men who were supportive:

I'm glad to say I've always had men in these courses. One semester, there were more men than women, and there were some male feminists in there. That was a fine time. (17)

The student's response led Dr. Nichols to decide to enlarge the scope of the project,

The next stage, I guess, was that I knew I was going to teach more women's literature classes. I went to the chairman and said, "We need to do this, not only in the English Department but all across campus. I don't know of any department at this time that's trying to do this." (8)

By March of 1988, Dr. Nichols had decided to find a faculty member in each department which had courses on the books in Women's Studies who would coordinate with her to make sure the courses were offered on a consistent basis and to act as a representative to and for women's studies. Of her original ideas and goals for the program, Dr. Nichols would later say:

I mainly wanted to get it established, just get it on the books. And then work from there. I wrote and talked to some women who were involved in women's studies programs elsewhere. I received quite a bit of information from them about structuring a program. I looked at these and realized that they were very fine documents, but I had to learn right quick that this was not to be an elaborately worked out program that could be criticized by the college or the Coordinating board [...] we simply were trying to get as many faculty members to participate as possible in the struggle. We did not have any great thesis or any great scheme at all. (Nichols 25-26)

The chair of the English department then advised her to take up the matter with the graduate council.

He said, "Well, why don't you go to the graduate school and see if you can't find out about getting a women's studies program launched." (8) [...] I called. Yes, they did want someone to start a women's program. As a matter of fact, they were glad. They told me what I needed to do, which was to write a proposal, not a long, involved one but just enough to give some idea of what was to be done. They would submit it to the Graduate Council. (10)

The council met on September 15, 1988. Dr. Nichols was told it would be the first item on the agenda, instead, it was the last:

It was finally passed at the end of a long meeting [...] It got to be 5:00 and people started picking up and leaving. We voted very quickly. None of the women left. Some of the men got up and left, and it passed [...] I just know that the women were the main supporters. I did have some men to support it, but I had two who disapproved. (Nichols 10-11)

For the first time since its disappearance after the 1981-82 catalogue, Women's Studies was listed in the 1989-90 centennial edition of the catalog, as one of fourteen interdisciplinary concentrations in the Master's program. The listing read, "Students interested in women's studies should consider the Master of Science degree in Interdisciplinary Studies." A student could choose three fields of study, taking at least six

hours and no more than fifteen in each field. (These are the same guidelines in effect today.)

An article in the NT Daily gave the results of the council meeting and featured Dr. Nichols speaking about the program. The article generated interest and Dr. Nichols received several calls from students. By the next semester two students were officially in the program.

On February 22, 1989, Dr. Nichols sent a memo asking for ideas on generating more publicity for the program to the eleven faculty members who had agreed to serve as representatives from their departments. These were Lois Jones, Art; Armenta Jacobsen, College of Education; Edra Bogle, English; Gloria Williamson, Health, Physical Education, and Recreation; Donald Pickens, History; Joyce Nies, Human Resource Management; Richard Wells, Journalism; Rosemary Killam, Music; Angela Burke, Psychology; Steve Fore, RTVF; and David Malone, Sociology.

Dr. Nichols wrote to these faculty members that she was “not a specialist in women’s studies, but I have accumulated a file of programs, etc. which might be helpful to us.” She suggested collaborating on a brochure that could be made available in department offices and the Graduate Office. During this semester, Dr. Nichols and Dr. Bogle also compiled a list of books for a women’s studies display section in the university bookstore. The list was also distributed to students for several years.

After several meetings throughout the year, the brochure was finalized on December 1, 1989. It read, in full:

Women’s Studies

Women's studies programs comprise a series of courses in various disciplines presented from the viewpoint of women or courses that contain material of particular interest and value to women. It is recognized that women often have attitudes and interests that differ from those of men; both men and women should have an education that reflects a variety of viewpoints. Women's studies offer such an education.

Women's studies are particularly significant now. More women are becoming active in all areas of our culture, from professions to business to politics to community services. Women are entering the workforce in unprecedented numbers, and old stereotypes of gender roles are being challenged. The changing roles and responsibilities of women have profoundly affected academic disciplines. Students in women's studies courses are introduced to these new approaches to traditional material.

Women's Studies at UNT

A variety of departments, Schools, and colleges offer courses that reflect the concerns and the perspective of women. Thus an interdisciplinary approach is ideal for persons pursuing an interest in women's studies. Unlike programs in many universities, the UNT curriculum includes areas of study outside the usual disciplines associated with the liberal arts. This multidisciplinary approach provides educational opportunities for a variety of careers. This program leads to a degree in interdisciplinary studies.

The Interdisciplinary Master of Science degree consists of no fewer than three separate fields of study with at least six hours in each field. No more than 15 hours may be taken in any one area. A thesis is optional. Below are the disciplines that offer courses relevant to women's studies: Anthropology; Art; English; History; Human Development and Family Studies; Industrial Technology; Journalism; Kinesiology, Health Promotion & Recreation; Marketing; Music; Psychology; RTVF; School of Resource Management; Sociology.

For more information on the Interdisciplinary degree in women's studies at UNT, contact Martha Nichols, department of English.

During 1990 Dr. Nichols sent the brochure to the departments and the graduate school as well as mailing over 500 to colleges and universities in Texas and surrounding states. In an October 12, 1990 memo to the women's studies faculty, which now consisted of the eleven members previously listed (Gloria Williamson was now Gloria Delany) as

well as Ann Jordan from Anthropology and Jack Starling from Marketing. Dr. Nichols mentioned the positive response to the brochure, writing,

I have received inquiries from quite a few prospects within the state and one from Oklahoma. Students on campus have come to my office for more information. This is encouraging.

The memo also included a list of things Dr. Nichols had been thinking about and wanted the faculty to respond to:

1. Developing interest and enthusiasm among ourselves so that we can work together to develop a program to attract students.
2. Attending the National Women's Studies Association meetings and becoming active, perhaps even hosting a regional meeting.
3. Putting out a newsletter available to everyone on campus, perhaps mailing copies to other universities.
4. Developing some structure for our curriculum, such as a required introductory course in women's studies (interdisciplinary) and perhaps a capstone seminar.
5. Presenting a program of general interest during Women's Fortnight, a noteworthy one.
6. Occasionally holding a forum where we can present our ideas to each other and receive input.

This memo also noted that UNT had officially joined the NWSA the week before, and contained other promising commitments. Janie Newcomer Fuller would help find women's studies grants, and Dean Preston would help with travel expenses to NWSA national or regional meetings. In addition, the Dean also was to pay for a women's studies expert to come to UNT to talk with the faculty about setting up a program.

During the next year, Dr. Nichols began working with Dr. Susan Platt from Art, and Dr. Max Oelschlaeger from Philosophy. Oelschlaeger explained his motivation:

And I worked with Susan considerably, partly because I'm interested in art history as this involves women and, see I'm not a native Texan and that's probably a good thing, and I came to North Texas with what were clearly

more radical outlooks and philosophies than most of the faculty who were here, and Susan Platt was very much like that as well. She was not part of southern culture and not a traditionalist, and was far more like the feminists that I had known in the Midwest, or that I had known professionally. [...] And so the people who were involved personally are the reason that we have what we have in women's studies at North Texas State and most of them were involved because of their own philosophical commitments and their sheer stubborn determination that there would be courses that were relevant to women's studies, and not because there was any sort of systematic support by the university administration or belief or perception on the part of the university administration that women's studies was an important part of the curriculum, or whatever. There has been more support in the last few years by the administration for women's studies than previously, but the level of support is very small. [...] Again, funds are always scarce and I would like to think that more could have been done. [...] And individuals are important in universities, make no mistake, but a university is an institution, and within that institution there's colleges, and departments, and programs, and you've got to have organization and structure that allow individuals to interact and cooperatively and collaboratively accomplish their agenda or you really don't have much. (27-30)

One of the tasks the trio worked on was to find an expert to help set up the program. Dr. Nichols explained:

We worked out a program. Susan Platt had heard of this woman [Peggy McIntosh] who was at Wellesley and had been educated at Harvard. She was doing two important tasks. She was trying to help people establish women's studies courses, and at the same time she was trying to persuade schools, as far as possible, to develop a multicultural curricula. I called her, and she agreed to help, if we would pay \$1,000 a day, which she didn't have any use for, but she'd turned it over to her research work. She helped to get us under way. (11-12)

Once Nichols, Oelschlaeger, and Platt had settled on a speaker, the next step was to arrange funding for Dr. McIntosh's visit. Nichols described,

That was when I went to see Provost Brownell and told him about her and showed him her vita. He decided that she sounded excellent, and he was willing to help pay for it. He would pay for the reception. He was very supportive. (11)

Nichols also revealed why they had approached Brownell,

I went to him because I had heard that the provost was interested and was encouraging women here at UNT, which was something new for North Texas [...] So I went to see him, and he liked her vita and the whole idea, so we did it. (11)

The funding of McIntosh's visit was the first of several important decisions regarding funding and support for Women's Studies which Provost Brownell would make over the next several years, decisions which would prove that he was indeed supportive of women at UNT.

On September 13, 1991, Dr. Nichols sent a memo to Provost Brownell, Jean Schaake of Arts and Sciences, and Gloria Contreras of Minority and Multicultural Affairs:

Peggy McIntosh of Wellesley can fit us into her calendar for October 29, 1991. She will hold two meetings for faculty interested in women's studies. The meetings will be informal with short talks from her followed by question and answer sessions. After the last session I am planning a reception...

Arts and Sciences and Multicultural and Minority Affairs had agreed to pay the \$1,000 speaking fee, and on September 18 Provost Brownell committed another \$1,000 to pay for transportation and lodging for Dr. McIntosh and for the meeting rooms at UNT.

McIntosh came to UNT on October 29, Nichols describes the event,

It was an all-day affair with two sessions. The first one was about women's studies and what to do and what one shouldn't do and things of that sort. The last one was about trying to accommodate the multicultural approach in the curriculum. She gave examples, and as people in the audience would ask her questions, such as: "What am I going to do with so and so? How can I do so and so in my curriculum?" The woman knew enough that she could just take on everything that anybody asked. It didn't

make any difference what field they were in. That was very informative. That started us off. (12-13)

Dr. Bogle also mentioned McIntosh visit and the aftermath,

Peggy McIntosh came and spoke to everyone who was interested, and did a really bang up job and gave us very specific suggestions as to how we might get started, particularly that we should have a charter for the women's studies program. And so Martha worked on that the next year and the charter was officially approved both by the women's studies faculty and by the administration in the spring semester of 1992. I sort of put quotations around women's studies faculty because it consists of anyone who decides that they want to come to a meeting. (19)

Positive input and good ideas, however, were coming not only from outside speakers and UNT faculty, but from students, some of whom had been inspired by the conference. One was D'Arlene Ver Duin, who sent the following letter to Martha Nichols and Gloria Contreras on November 8, 1991.

As an undergraduate women's studies minor at UNT, I attended the mini-conference held October 29. I think the forum was valuable in providing a forum to discuss the future of the Women's Studies program. I have been thinking about the program and what its goals should be. Initially, I think the program should have some space, office equipment, and sponsorship by one of the academic deans o campus. Credibility must be established before any of the long term goals and objectives can be accomplished.

I am enclosing a list of recommendations to establish this credibility. I am interested in your response to these ideas/suggestions. I want to be a part of this process...Please include me in meetings and conversations about the Women's Studies program. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Ver Duin's list of recommendations made it clear that she had indeed been thinking, very seriously, about the program's needs. The first part of her list itemized in specific detail what be needed for a "Women's Studies Center." The rest of her recommendations were designed to give Women's Studies academic credibility:

Coordinate with University Program Council for speakers like Sarah Weddington/Peggy McIntosh. Timely coverage by Daily/Update, etc. (make personal pitch to editor). Signs in Union about Women's Studies program/events/center with phone #.

Introduction by (Chancellor Al) Hurley/Academic Deans of changes in program to others (reinforces UNT's commitment to program).

Sponsorship by one of VP's to maintain UNT's commitment to program.

Research on possible grants available to fund visiting professors for a semester and coordinate with other departments about sharing professor/costs.

Grant research to underwrite full-time professors/researchers to establish Women's Studies as valid and credible center, institute, or department.

Include Women's Studies as part of University options (in brochures and presentations) for planned giving/alumni/corporate giving. Investment in the future of tomorrow's executive women.

Ver Duin's expansive list had pointed out a myriad of important needs, but it would take many people many years to put all of these things in place at UNT. Perhaps, as Max Oelschlaeger would later say, Macintosh's visit had raised hopes a little too highly. (28)

But the advisory board began working to implement another of Macintosh's main ideas, as noted in a memo from Martha Nichols to the Women's Studies faculty on January 14, 1992, which said that discussing, amending, and/or approval of the Charter for Women's Studies would take place at the January 27 meeting. As Nichols later simply put it, "Max and Susan and I got together a charter, which was very similar to the one in Environmental Ethics, and it passed" (11).

Dr. Nichols noted some of the other work that took place after Macintosh's visit,

Setting up the program got to be something of a chore. It was hard to get a faculty to cohere, and that is the reason we had this woman from Harvard to talk to us and to try to help us. She said that one of the best ways we could help ourselves and to get to know ourselves and become cohesive was to have these monthly programs that somebody would put on...They

went on for a year. Everybody would know something about everybody else's course and how it reflected women [...] We tried to get faculty interested in each other and interested in doing something with those programs. (30)

Nichols January 14 memo also set the schedule for that semester's programs, Susan Platt from Art presented on January 27, Max Oelschlaeger from Philosophy on February 17, Shelley Cushman from Dance on March 23, and Jocelyn Chadwick-Joshua from English on April 20. A presentation was later added for March 2, featuring Shirley Abbott, author of Womenfolks: Growing Up Down South and The Bookmaker's Daughter, spoke on Women and Writing.

Max Oelschlaeger mentioned bringing in an outside speaker during this time:

Cook: I was wondering if there were any other specifics of the time that you and Dr. Platt and Dr. Nichols were trying to get some of this started on campus.

Oelschlaeger: Since part of your interest Charles is in rich narrative, or deep narrative or whatever, I'll give you a little story. One of the things we did, this must be, um, eight years ago off the top of my head, was somehow we scared up a little money for a speaker, and we brought Eleanor Gaden (SIC?) who had just recently published a book called The Once and Future Goddess, from Harper Row San Francisco, I guess now it's Harper San Francisco. Wonderful book full of all these very powerful feminist images from the prehistoric up to the present, from some of the Venus statuary from the Paleolithic period up to Judy Chicago and Judith Anderson, that was how I learned about her. And Eleanor is an incredible powerhouse of a woman, she's maybe sixty-two, sixty-four years old, somewhere in there, and crone type figure, and a Goddess feminist, and has taught at Harvard and traveled around the world and spent years in India. So she came to campus and gave a lecture or two in the smaller classes and then we had a large public meeting over in the art building in one of the auditorium's which was standing room only. I don't know how many the auditorium seated but I would guess three hundred and fifty or four hundred, which for a university event to get an SRO is major. And it was a wonderful lecture full of all these powerful stories that Eleanor had to tell about all the wonderful images she was showing of this feminist art through the ages and it was just one of the most successful events that ever

happened on this campus. Which again shows me the intrinsic importance to the mission of the university of women's studies, because people gravitate to this, people don't know that they need it sometimes, but they gravitate to it. It also brought on to campus a lot of people that otherwise would never come, there's a lot of people with these sensibilities all around, so in terms of reaching out to the community which is also part of the mission of the university, women's studies could be a boon in that regard. Now I would like to think that the university would be able to afford at least once a semester to bring in someone of that stature to speak, that could help women's studies a lot, but it seldom happens. The one time that it happened, at least where I was involved with it which was many years ago, it was a tremendous success [...] there were a variety of sponsors, the Art department kicked in a little money, and the Philosophy department, but I think Blaine Brownell probably kicked in five hundred or seven hundred dollars or something, I mean you've got to, when you bring in a major figure like that the minimum stipend is usually a thousand dollars. And then you've got to pay for all their ancillary expenses, travel and so on, so you've got to shake up at least a couple of thousand dollars minimum to make the thing happen. Which is not all that much, I mean the football team uses two thousand dollars worth of jockstraps in a month. (35-38)

While there was still much work to be done, Dr. Nichols had succeeded in putting Women's Studies on radar screen of the university.

CHAPTER V

DR. EDRA BOGLE AND THE PERIOD FROM 1992-1994

In the Fall of 1992 Dr. Nichols passed the leadership of Women's Studies on to Dr. Edra Bogle. However, Nichols continued to teach courses on women authors, she looked back very fondly on her experiences,

It had been a great experience, and I've developed a number of courses focusing on women in American literature. They are period courses: Romantic. early 19th century, late 19th century, 20th century, and so on. I've always had good response. Those courses revitalized my whole career. (18)

When asked directly to spotlight low points, or if there had been any, Dr. Nichols responded, "No. I don't feel there have been any low points at all. Maybe I've just been lucky" (29).

Dr. Edra Bogle brought a wealth of experience in feminist activism to UNT. She earned her doctorate in Comparative Literature from the University of Southern California in 1968. While she had trained as a librarian, she moved to teaching because of lack of opportunities for women in the position of head librarian. As she recalled, "...at that time in the Association of College and Research Libraries there was one woman who was a head librarian. She was a nun at a Catholic University" (3). This situation had opened Bogle's eyes to the inequities faced by women, but her introduction to women writers with feminist themes came from reading on her own science fiction authors such as Joanna Russ, Ann McCaffery, and Ursula K. LeGuin in the late 1960's. (7) In Denton

in the early 1970's she became involved in the starting of a NOW chapter (she would eventually be vice president) working primarily on fundraising, consciousness raising, and issues affecting schoolgirls, such as the lack of representation of females in textbooks. (9) Dr. Bogle became active in gay and lesbian politics in the late 1970's, becoming one of the first "out" professors at UNT in 1978, and helping to organize Denton's first gay and lesbian association, GLAD, in 1980. (12) It is another measure of the variety of activism in her career, and one that seems to often be a part of the lives of feminist activists, that she knew Dr. Nichols from their work for the Denton Humane Society as well as from the English department. (13)

In the mid-1980's the Norton Anthology of World Literature began including women authors and Dr. Bogle began teaching them in her literature courses. In March of 1988 she was asked by Dr. Nichols to be the English department's representative on the Women's Studies advisory board.

Dr. Bogle recalled the circumstances when she took over as Women's Studies coordinator,

During the summer Martha [...] decided that she wanted to go on "modified service." She came to me and asked if I would take over as coordinator, and I said that I would be glad to do so [...] Martha had always had release time from the English department. Not from the university, but it's the English department that was paying the salary of the women's studies coordinator both with Martha and with myself. So it had to be approved by the department chair. I don't know if Jim Lee would have done it, but Jim Duban [the new chair] certainly was willing to. So I became coordinator that Fall. (22)

Lee and Duban were referenced in regard to an ongoing and often bitter battle in the English department which had sharply divided the faculty, and which would later impact Women's Studies.

On October 23, Bogle sent out a list of "Graduate and Undergraduate Courses Addressing Women's Studies and/or Gender Issues for the 1993 Spring Semester." Listed were two English courses at the 5000 and 6000 level, "Feminist Rhetorical Theory and 19th & 20th Century Short Fiction," and "Women's Tradition in Modern American Poetry," History 4260, "Proseminar in US Women's History Since 1830," and one undergraduate and one graduate course in Psychology, "Psychological Dynamics of Women," and "Psychology of Women: An Analysis of Dynamics." In addition there were several courses listed with the notation that they were "not a course devoted just to women's studies." These included two graduate English courses, "Novel from Jane Austen to George Eliot," and "Seminar in Woolf and Foster;" two undergraduate courses in Journalism dealing with Public Relations and Public Relations Communication; two undergraduate courses in RTVF dealing with Mass Media, Aids, and Cultural Politics; two courses in Secondary Education, "Teaching Diverse Populations," (undergrad) and "Philosophy and Principles of Multicultural Education," (graduate); Political Science 4210, "Constitutional Law: Rights and Liberties;" and eight courses in Drama, including "Non-Western Theatre and Drama," and "Asian Theatre."

In a memo sent to the Women's Studies faculty on November 17, Bogle asked that the group forego a speaker for their final meeting of the semester and instead have a discussion about women's studies at UNT. Her memo listed concerns about the program

they hoped to address, including a lack of consistency, limited course offerings, the fact that the program was “little known on campus; nearly unknown off campus,” and had “tenuous and undefined relationships with other women’s groups.” At the end she addressed questions central to all Women’s Studies programs, the “Confusion of role: are we basically an academic discipline? A service for academic disciplines? A consciousness raising group? How ‘feminist’ are we? Can students take courses at other universities?” Before the meeting she added another concern, “How can we support feminist research on campus?”

The memo also contained Bogle’s possible solutions to these problems. They included: increased visibility, although she expressed concern that this could raise the hackles of the Coordinating Board; dividing duties between Women’s Studies and other women’s groups; making the faculty more cohesive; offering a core seminar; having a meeting place and regular meetings; planning courses to be suggested to departments; and to “Work towards getting women’s issues and/or women included as a part of all courses.”

At the meeting, Dr. Bogle got feedback from the faculty members who attended,

They said that there were two things that they wanted especially [...] a women’s center, not an elaborate thing necessarily, but a place where women could bring brown bag lunches and talk together and where there could be some books available that could be checked out easily, and where we could have meeting such as the Women’s Studies faculty. The spring before there was an informal faculty women’s group that had met and had expressed exactly the same desire for someplace on campus for women to meet. (22) [...] The other priority was that we have a general women’s studies course in the curriculum. So that all of these bits and pieces of information in the different departments could be coordinated in the student’s background and that we could teach some general theory rather

than just women in literature, women in history, psychology of women, sociology of the family, etcetera. And I said that I would work towards that. (23)

The minutes of the December 3 meeting listed all of the concerns dealt with at the meeting. In addition to a Women's Studies Office and the need for cooperation among groups, the main issues were,

A. Course offerings in Women's Studies

1. It was reported that in addition to those listed in the catalog, other courses have frequently been allowed to fulfill the requirements for both under- and graduate programs.
2. It was suggested that we might inquire with the University planning office about the possibility of surveying undergraduate and graduate students in the Undergraduate Interdisciplinary minor or the Graduate Interdisciplinary Masters in Women's Studies concerning their feelings about the sufficiency of women's issues courses within existing programs.
3. A discussion ensued of the need for a list of all courses taught in the university which deal in a substantial way with women's issues and establishment of criteria for the inclusion of such courses on a list. The Director was instructed to send out a memo to the committee members to request lists and course descriptions, including the percentage of time spent on gender issues, the instructor's names, and the frequency with which these courses are offered.
4. We discussed the possibility of an experimental course with representative lecturers from different disciplines to be presented as "Woman in Society." Max Oelschlaeger suggested that it be offered for the first time next spring, and That in the fall, prospective lecturers put together a packet of readings for the course. Such a compilation might eventually be offered as a textbook.
5. The importance of getting gender issues into regular coursework was mentioned. Some areas mentioned included Higher Education/ PS Admin / COBA (Rose Knotts).
6. Susan Platt suggested compiling materials related to obscure women in our fields. A graduate student in Interdisciplinary Studies might compile this. The reading list compiled by Martha Nichols also needs to be sent to this committee.

B. How can research on women's issues be encouraged/supported?

1. Contacts between individuals with such interests, including graduate students, needs to be encouraged.

2. Library books need to be ordered from various departments. ("In a Different Voice.")
3. A seminar might be held with people from different fields, e.g. Sociology, with emphasis on the relationships between the fields. Source of grant money: undergraduate instructional grants?

Bogle then worked to reestablish the departmental representatives,

I wanted to get the representatives from each department reestablished. They had agreed under Martha but then most of them had sloughed off, and really weren't doing anything. One of their main uses was that the only way that a coordinator of women's studies knew what women's studies courses were being offered was by having the departments send them that information, and I'd send, Martha had and I would, send around a message to each department chair. And sometimes I'd receive an answer and most often I would not, mainly I had to check the schedule of classes after it came out and find out what was being offered, which of course was sort of late because people had already been in for counseling by that time. (24)

Dr. Bogle spoke about the problems students were having

It didn't have any real consistency or any goal available to the student: There wasn't any sequence of courses; there wasn't any core course that they could take to make their information jell together; the offerings were very limited. You were supposed to take six courses at the undergraduate level, and aside from special topics courses, there was one course listed as a regular in History. No, that was even a special topics course - one in English, one in History, three in Psychology, and three in Sociology, and those three in Sociology were all child and family centered, really rather than the women's courses. This means that there was a mighty slim variety of offerings at the undergraduate level. At the graduate level there was just no telling what was going to be offered. You were supposed to take three fields with at least six hours in each, and when people would come to me for counseling, I would say, "I have no idea what they're going to schedule in these fields, what you're going to need to do is go over and talk to Dr. [Max] Oelschlaeger in Philosophy, or Linda Marshall in Psychology, or [so and so], and see what they think they may be offering in the next couple of years while you are here." (25) [...] Martha had files on about half a dozen graduate students and about twice that number of names appeared in her general file on the undergraduate students. Of course, it wasn't really a declared minor or major. For most of them it was just when

they showed up at the door and would say, “I want to talk to you about women’s studies,” that I would find out about them. (26)

One of these students was Beth Eakman, who would later become the first UNT student to receive a Master’s Degree with an emphasis in Women’s Studies. Like Dr. Bogle in the 50’s and Dr. Barbara Rodman (who would be the next coordinator) in the 60’s, Eakman’s undergraduate work in the 80’s (at TCU) contained little exposure to feminism or women writers and scholars, but, also like Bogle and Rodman, and with the encouragement of her sister Jennifer, who was a women’s studies minor, she introduced herself to feminism, through readings such as When God Was A Woman, Ann Schaeff’s Women’s Realities, and Catherine MacKinnon’s Feminism Unmodified. (Eakman, O.H. 21)

The backlash against women’s rights during the Reagan-Bush era would then take her from awareness to activism, as she remembered:

I do specifically recall what took me from just having these feelings and discussing them with my friends to actually trotting myself down to the local Planned Parenthood and getting active. I had been out of TCU for a couple of years, I had graduated [...] Sarah, my youngest sister was 15. And I was just watching one of these things on television, and they were showing a little girl who was fifteen years old [...] and she had been raped by a retarded man with syphilis. And she was so traumatized by the whole scenario that she had actually spent the first three months after the rape [...] in a catatonic state in the hospital. And when she came out of it and began to communicate with her parents again and everything, of course they found out that she was pregnant, and she was in one of the states [where} they were beginning to restrict access to abortion [...] Up until then, abortion had been, safe and accessible abortion had been a reality for me my whole life. I was born in 1964, basically from the time I was conscious, and all the sudden I realized they were restricting it. And then finally, this family, with a court order, the child was now like six months pregnant, they were able to take her across state lines. And they show this little girl, fifteen years old, who’s clearly so fragile, and her parents,

walking into a clinic and she was being harassed and screamed at by people with signs that are yelling "Murderer" at her. And she, I looked into her eyes and I just got chills. And I got tears in my eyes because I thought that, it hit home to me because it could have been Sarah, you know Sarah was fifteen. I understood what it was, how I would feel if that were Sarah. And I mean I literally, the next day was in the Planned Parenthood of Ft. Worth office saying "let me do something." (O.H. 12-13)

The realities of the backlash, and Eakman's awareness of them, ensured that she came to grad school at UNT having already become a feminist activist. She describes the events that led to her entering the Women's Studies program,

I wanted specifically to do gender research in early childhood education. My first semester, I had to do some leveling classes. I had to retake some courses that I had either taken the wrong sort as an undergrad or because my undergraduate grades had been so bad that I was retaking. And so taking things like an English class, a Physics class -- really sort of core curriculum type stuff, but mostly with education majors. About halfway through the semester I was so disgusted [...] I was just at a point in my life where I remember thinking "If I'm going to put this kind of effort, I mean several years worth of effort into being in school, what is it that I really want to do?" And I remember sitting in my bedroom and thinking "Okay, why can't I do what I really really want to do?" And then I thought "Well, what is it that I really really want to do?" I thought, "Well ever since Jennifer (my sister) took women's studies I thought I just loved that idea. Why can't I do it?" I'd always complained about the fact that I let other people define for me what I wanted for my life -- that I wanted to be married to this person, that I wanted to be in a sorority -- all these things that I had never really known what I wanted for myself. So I sat down and had a hard talk with myself and decided that's what I wanted. (O.H. 30)

After making this life-altering decision, Eakman began to try to see what UNT had to offer. It was an eye-opening experience, as she detailed:

I sat down and looked through the UNT catalog and lo and behold in a back page under Interdisciplinary Studies was Women's Studies. I was both really disgusted with what was going on in my life and really excited and wanting this so badly. I called the school and I asked them to hook me up with women's studies. My call was transferred eight times, and I finally was hooked up with Edra Bogle, who was running the program at that

time. One of the reasons that my call was transferred so many times was that the few people who had heard of women's studies still thought it was headed by Martha Nichols. (O.H. 30-31)

After the initial confusion, Eakman's entrance into Women's Studies would pay off quickly,

I hooked up with Dr. Bogle in March of that year, and she immediately tried to kind of steer the classes that I was enrolled in towards more feminist-oriented writing and research courses and got me advised [in that direction]. She got me interested in attending conferences which was a huge bonus, a great advantage in my whole graduate education. On her advice I went to Harvard that April to hear Carol Gilligan read from what was going to be her book Meeting at the Crossroads, and I was so moved by that that I just knew that was exactly where I needed to be [...] It all happened really fast and I was stressed by how fast it was going but I was so happy. I just knew I was exactly where I should be. (O.H. 31)

While Eakman had quickly realized she had found the place for her, she harbored no illusions about the state of Women's Studies at North Texas.

Cook: So what did you know at that point about the women's studies program, other than that's what you were going to get your degree in?
Eakman: Well, I knew that we were underfunded. Or that we were not funded; that we had no faculty; that we had no administrative support, and that it was complete anarchy. I remember thinking, "I can see this anarchy as terrible or I can see it as, Well, hey, I can be in charge of my own destiny because no one else will." So, I decided to take that approach to it. But it was very much anarchy when I started. (O.H. 36)

Dr. Bogle also gave her views on the lack of organization at this time,

Cook: Beth Eakman told the story that when she wanted to find out about women's studies...she found the tiny part in the catalog and called the switchboard to ask for women's studies. Before she got to you her call had been transferred eight times.

Bogle: (Loud sigh) I can't say that I'm surprised but I am appalled. The mail used to get shunted around campus that way, too. I would get something in my box that had been three or four different places first [...] (26)

Cook: You said there were about six graduate students.

Bogle: Yes.

Cook: Were they having any luck finding enough courses to take?

Bogle: Most of them just drifted away, and again I think it's because they didn't have enough luck to do so. And I think what most of them went ahead and did was just go ahead and get a Masters in whatever was their major field. There was one woman over in...I want to say physical therapy but that isn't quite right but something like that, that was around for years and took all the courses but I think she eventually got a degree in her field, and she's just one example, there were several others like that. (28)

Stacy Erickson was one student in the program who ended up following the path Dr. Bogle described.

I think that I spent two semesters as a women's studies major. It was so unorganized at that point that I knew I had to find three advisors and that I was totally on my own with that. I wasn't getting any kind of teaching experience or funding at that point, so I sort of just faded away from the program and went back to English, where it was more structured, where I could get fellowships and teaching fellowships [...] I felt, sort of being on my own, and really not supported. And I don't blame Dr. Bogle for that at all, the program was so new at that point she was probably overwhelmed to be helping to get all these things started. (11)

Lack of an established faculty was another problem noted by Erickson. Max Oelschlaeger also commented on the importance of the faculty.

There's something about having a faculty. If you have a women's studies faculty, that's not just ceremonial. You've got five or six people and they meet as a faculty, they have faculty meetings, they talk about a curriculum, they talk about student advisement, and they talk about research. Where you begin to have a department, you begin to have an identity where the students say, "Ah, yes, we do have a faculty. It's Dr. Platt and Dr. Sahlin, it's Dr. 'Smith' and Dr. 'Jones' and Dr. Oelschlaeger." (34)

When asked what could have changed her decision, Erickson explained:

I just felt really lost in the shuffle. Anything that could have kept me from that feeling, and knowing other women's studies majors would have kept me in women's studies. In English classes I know all the concerns of the other English majors. We talk about degree plan problems or advising problems, and we have a sounding board. (49)

Erickson maintained her focus on women's issues.

Cook: So then when you went back to English did you still focus on women's issues?

Erickson: Oh, completely. I still continued taking the women's literature classes. I think that I had two more with Dr. Nichols. I took a class with [Dr. Jocelyn] Chadwick-Joshua on feminist rhetoric, which I came from every night just pumped up, like I was full of adrenaline, ready to take on the world. Her classes were so inspiring. I continued the same focus. Every class I took, I always picked women authors, so nothing really changed for me, just different to the Graduate Office. (11)

She also spoke of her classes with Dr. Snapp in History and Dr. Jordan in

Anthropology:

[Dr. Snapp] seemed very sincere and [...] he was very informed about the topic and took it seriously, that was my impression in the classroom. (10)
[Dr. Ann Jordan] Women in Culture is what it was called. Actually, I had two classes with her, that and the Supernatural class. She very actively includes women's issues, and, of course, in Women in Culture she does. But that was a very eye-opening class, and I think anthropology in general makes you look at things in a new way, to not be so ethnocentric. That can apply to your own gender structures in a society. She was a very, very interesting teacher. (49-50)

Dr. Jocelyn Chadwick-Joshua of the English faculty was a key figure in assuring that Women's Studies at UNT would include courses on women of color. Her classes, such as "Radical Rhetoric of the Third World and Women of Color," introduced students to women authors from nearly every American ethnic group as well as from around the world, and to classic collections such as This Bridge Called My Back, which critiqued not only the sexism faced by the authors but the racism and ethnocentrism they sometimes faced within the women's movement. Many students, including myself, had the same feelings about her courses as Erickson articulated above.

Although students were finding the Women's Studies experience a bit unsettled, Dr. Bogle did have success in getting approval for one of the chief concerns noted by the Women's Studies faculty, UNT's first official "Women's Studies" course, in the Spring of 1993:

I had been sending memos to Dean Schaake, Dean Preston had retired at that time, and we didn't have a new dean yet, and so Assistant Dean Schaake was handling it. I got her approval for the course and got it listed in early April, which meant that I sent a memo out to the Women's Studies faculty. What we had decided in a couple of meetings to do, if we got the course approved, was to have a different topic each night, taught by a volunteer from within that discipline, and then a couple of meetings that would be on the general background core of women's studies in general. And that I would do the coordinating of all of this. (Bogle 28-29)

However, there were delays throughout the summer because Dean Preston had resigned and Assistant Dean Schaake thought it better to wait for the new dean to send it on to the curriculum committee. The good news was the new dean was Dr. Nora Kizer Bell, and her appointment marked the first time a woman was hired to lead a college at UNT outside of Hospitality and Management. Bell had received her undergraduate degree from A.B. Randolph-Macon Woman's College, and her PhD in Philosophy from UNC-Chapel Hill. She had done extensive research in the area of Bio-Ethics, including issues facing women with AIDS.

Dr. Bogle sent Dean Bell a memo as soon as she arrived, dated October 13, 1993, informing her of the background of UNT Women's Studies and funding issues that had arisen, as well as requesting that she send the course request to the curriculum committee. Just before Christmas, the course was approved. Dr. Bogle explained the next steps:

By that time Rosemary Killam of the Music department had been working with me. She was the only other person that had any general interest in women's studies as opposed to just their specific area, and she had a much better background, actually, in the academic part of it. I'd always been much more political. Rosemary had been working with me, and I asked her to co-coordinate the course, and she said she couldn't unless she could be the teacher of record and have her courseload in the Music department reduced. Eventually we did manage to get that through so that Rosemary was the teacher of record. (30) [...] Dean Schaaake had gone back to very, very old catalogs and had found that we indeed had offered such a course as a University course [elective] in the 1960's so she just resurrected the number that it had been listed at back there in the sixties. (30)

The first offering of the course would be in the Spring semester of 1994. Dr.

Bogle describes the course,

We started up with an outside speaker, Brenda Phillips, from TWU, who was at that time, and I believe even now, the only person in town who actually had taken courses in women's studies as a graduate student. She talked about the history and development of women's studies. Then I handled the next week and talked about sex role stereotyping and sexual orientation issues affecting women. One of our graduate students in the department, David Sorrels, talked about whether a man could be a feminist or not. So, those two were fairly general. Then we got into some much more specific ones. Max Oelschlaeger, from Philosophy, talked on one of his favorite topics, goddess culture and goddess feminism; Susan Platt from Art talked about women's art and society, and showed some very interesting slides; Ann Jordan from Anthropology gave a cross-cultural perspective; Shelly Cushman from Dance talked about the image of dance and how the image of one's body is reflected in one's security; Armenta Jacobsen in Education talked about becoming female, a look at the developmental process, how little girls establish their identity and grow into women; Harriet Aaronson from Psychology talked about old women, aging, the next time. Then John Eddy from Adult and Higher Education, talked about American women as role models for college students, and gave a lot of background of outstanding women as role models. Dean Bell, talked about feminist issues in bio-ethics. Particularly, I remember her speaking of all the AIDS babies that were being born and the problems that were going to occur with them. Martha Nichols talked about early American literature and women, and a little later Jocelyn Chadwick-Joshua talked about later nineteenth century and twentieth century feminist short fiction writers and their rhetoric. Sharon Jenkins from Psychology

talked about careers for women; and Rosemary Killam talked about music and women. And she had done a study in particular on women musicians' relationships with other professional women, placing women musicians within the community of women. Harry Snapp talked about sources for Texas women's history. His wife, of course, is the librarian at TWU and so he was able to give us a lot of information about that really excellent collection over there. And Susan Hudson in KHPR finished us up with a feminist perspective on women's leisure. (31-33)

The evaluations of the students were also handled partially by the visiting speakers, as Bogle noted:

What we did each time was that they would give their presentation. Sometimes it was a lecture; sometimes it was partly film; sometimes it was an interactive kind of activity, at least part of the time. Then there would be a quiz over this material at the end of the class and the teacher, either Rosemary or I, would check the evaluative instrument. Each of them chose their own evaluative instrument. Some of them actually checked them. John Eddy had brought a couple of doctoral students who checked them while he was finishing up and handed them back that very night. He just worked like clockwork. But other times it would be weeks until they would get back and then we would have to distribute them to the students. One had the students write a little evaluative essay, and then she read them over, and then she handed them to the students to reevaluate, and then she got them back and then the students got them back; so we had to chase her down twice, and chase the students down several times, etc. Then they did a general comprehensive essay for Mid-term and Final. So there was an awful lot of that kind of coordination, too. (33-34)

Bogle talked about the effort that goes into such a collaborative course:

It was an incredible amount of work. If anyone ever wants to teach a course with volunteers giving lectures, they should know that it is at least twice as much work as doing it yourself, if not three times as much work. I think it turned out to be a really excellent course, and we had some really good students. We had it listed at the 4000 level so that both undergraduates and graduates could take it, and there were some of each... (30)

Cook: About how many students were in that class?

Bogle: Yes. I just checked my records and apparently there were only 17, I had thought that there were more than that [...] I believe there were three men, but mostly women, and quite a variety of ages, mostly young. One of

the men was considerably older, and a couple of the women were somewhat older. So there was quite a variety. They were all very enthusiastic. We did lose a couple to drops, but it was because of outside obligations that they just couldn't avoid, rather than anyone losing interest in it. (34)

Besides the success of the first official course in Women's Studies, another event would take place during that Spring semester of 1994 which offered a great opportunity for Women's Studies at UNT. Dr. Bogle explained:

In March, two of our undergraduates, Julie Lei and Kate Yarborough, went to the South Central Women's Studies Association conference in New Orleans. They [the Association] had just lost the people who were going to put the conference on the next year. And so Julie and Kate, both of whom, Kate was an older woman, Julie was very mature, brought home a request to hold it here the next year. They were all gung-ho and enthused about it, and it sounded like a great thing, if we could get some backing. (45)

However, trying to quickly secure enough commitments to make sure that UNT could properly host such a large and important conference was not easy, and the ensuing confusion created ill feelings which would dramatically impact the administration of women's studies, as Dr. Bogle related:

... for the next three weeks, we tried to get some sort of statement out of Dean Bell, and there was a lot of hard feeling between Julie and Kate and myself in the long run because I kept saying "Look, we can't do it if we don't have the university's approval. We can't do it if we don't have some money from the university. We've got to have their official approval." (45)

The conference committee of the SCWSA was very anxious during the wait, and was contacting Lei and Yarborough through e-mail. The English department, however, was not linked with e-mail, and Dr. Bogle felt she was left out of the loop. She described a memo she sent to Dean Bell on April 7 detailing the situation:

I stated the problems that I saw were that I was hearing everything from the organization through someone else [...] So I was never certain what had been said. There were delays in getting information, I didn't know what I didn't know [...] A lot of the major decisions seemed to be made by persons in the organization, and I didn't know what their authority was. Everything on campus seemed to be being set up to go through another entity - Dean Bell's office, the Conference Bureau, a local committee that Julie and Kate discussed and had asked some people to be on. Dean Bell had sent the conference people a letter by this time, saying that "Yes, we were pleased to accept having the conference." But my name was not mentioned on that letter at all. She obviously was not going to have time to micromanage the conference.

Commitments were being made to the conference bureau, to the organization -- and all in the name of two undergraduates. They were, and are, indeed very good people, but it seemed to me to be carrying equality and feminism a bit far, to think that they would be completely in charge of a major conference like this. For one thing they could not legally sign any of the papers, they were bringing papers to me to sign, and I had no knowledge of what it was that I was signing.

At the meeting that we had had with Dean Bell, she had said she was ultimately responsible for such a convention, and I said to her that if she did not micromanage it -- and she had said she did not intend to -- and that if I was in charge, I would be responsible for it; and I had no problem with taking responsibility but I had to have some information and I had to have some authority. I didn't hear anything back really about that. (46-47)

At the meeting of the Women's Studies faculty on April 26, Dr. Bogle noted that

Problems have arisen because of too many worthwhile activities available: 1) the success of the current Women's Studies course which makes offering it next Spring imperative; 2) an invitation to put on the SCWSA Annual Conference here next Spring; and 3) the routine running of the Women's Studies program, including advising students, checking with departments concerning their offerings, paying bills, answering inquiries, and doing long-range planning. (WS faculty meeting minutes 4/26/94)

Problems arising because of "too many worthwhile activities" would become a constant theme for UNT Women's Studies. At this point, Bogle decided that these three items were too much for one person to handle without additional release time, and that it was not fair to continue asking the English department to be the single source of this

release time. Because of this, Bogle had submitted her resignation as Coordinator of Women's Studies to Dean Bell on April 18, but hoped to remain as UNT's chair for the SCWSA conference.

Shortly after, Dr. Barbara Rodman, whose daughter had been a student in the Women's Studies course, had a meeting with Dean Bell. Like Bogle, Rodman also had a background in feminist activism, and had not been introduced to feminism or feminist authors in her original college experience. It was after completing her undergraduate work at Colorado University in 1970 that she moved to Boston and became involved with a feminist group called "Bread and Roses." She also began to read feminist authors on her own, authors such as Dorris Lessing, Marge Piercy, and Denise Levertov. (6-7) When she returned to Colorado she began a NOW chapter in Greeley in 1972. (14) She worked in local and state government through the 70's, then returned to school and earned her Ph.D. in Creative Writing from the University of Denver in 1988. (19) Her graduate experience was still lacking in exposure to feminist authors, but she would begin teaching these authors when she started her teaching career, first at Colorado State University, then at Texas Tech, and then at UNT. (21-22) She arrived at UNT in 1990, when the Duban - Lee feud which would divide the English Department was just beginning.

Dr. Rodman describes her meeting with Dean Bell,

I happened to go to her office and we had this wonderful chat. We'd hardly met each other before. This was Dean Bell, in her first year, and she said to me at one point, "What do you know about women's studies?" I said. "Well, nothing, really. My daughter has taken this course though." Then I told her about my history in feminism and with NOW and my theories about organization and community building. She kind of glanced at her watch and said, "Well, I need to get going. I'm on my way now to

meet with a group of advisors on women. You know that Dr. Bogle is stepping down. She's giving me her resignation, and I need to appoint someone else. Would you be willing to take Women's Studies on?" Well, of course, I was quite taken aback and I said I needed to think about this, that I didn't know if that was good or bad[for me]. She said "Well, I'd like to go ahead and announce that I have you signed up at this meeting so they'll know there's continuity, and then we can work the details out." (27) [... But that ...] was in the midst of the planning for that [SCWSA conference], and that was part of the pressure on the dean to get somebody else appointed, because we were committed to run that conference the next year and she needed to get a mechanism in place to do it. (28)

While the dean had one set of concerns, Rodman had another, mainly dealing with tenure status. These concerns were apparent to other faculty women as well. Dr. Nichols would later say that she would not advise an untenured woman to get involved with Women's Studies. (29) Rodman explains,

My concerns at the time had to do with my own tenure status, because I was untenured, and that's the sort of thing that can often kill your tenure [chances], is to take on too much service [...] it was a risk, and I did get some senior faculty women in other departments... and this is where my long time commitment to networking paid off. People like Charldean Newell and Linda Marshall, who are full professors in other departments, contacted the dean and said "We've talked to Barbara and told her not to take the job unless you write a letter to her file offering some protection for her and guaranteeing that if she continues to work in her own area that this won't, at least, be seen as a negative thing and that she'll be given credit for her service." This did, in fact, occur. I did have a letter from the dean. (28-29)

Another reason that Dean Bell may have been willing to offer Dr. Rodman the job of leading Women's Studies so quickly were the reports she had received from Dr. Bogle that it would be a difficult job to fill. Bogle described her report to Dean Bell on this matter:

I brought up the problem that it was just too much for anybody to handle the conference, the course, and coordinating all of them in the Spring

semester, especially with only one released course load, while teaching three other courses [...] (48-49) She [Dean Bell] had said in our oral conference with Julie and Kate that there were a lot of other women on the faculty that were really interested in this and that she was sure that they would get involved. I said “Fine, maybe you can get some of these other women to be the coordinator.” I knew the women who had been involved with the course, Susan Platt, or Rosemary Killam, or the women in Psychology or whatever, had no intention of becoming the coordinator. They had quite enough “fish to fry” [were busy] in their own areas, so that anybody else would be welcome. But I didn’t know who it would be. Certainly, it wouldn’t be anybody that had been attending the meetings. (49)

The Advisory Board met on April 26. Dr. Bogle said that at the meeting it was decided that she would run the conference, Dr. Killam would teach the course, and that Dr. Rodman would be the coordinator. Bogle said that Bell first agreed to this, then changed her mind,

She said that on the advice of a number of women on campus she’d turned down the reading room and that she had talked to Barbara and [...] that Barbara was to run the conference, be the coordinator, and handle the course [...] was made by the Dean in charge of everything. Again, this was completely against the action of the duly constituted and chartered faculty of women’s studies at a meeting three days before. That is why I feel very bitter about it. (51-52)

While Dr. Bogle believed that it was too much to ask one person to coordinate the program, teach the course, and run the conference, other women expressed the view that it would not have been fair for the new coordinator not to be in charge of items so crucial to Women’s Studies’ development such as the course and the conference.

What is undeniable is that this marked a major transition in the administration of Women’s Studies at UNT. While Dr. Nichols had basically been appointed by the English department, and Dr. Bogle by the Advisory Board set up by Dr. Nichols, the new

coordinator had been appointed by and would report directly to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. On April 29, Dean Bell sent out a memo to all faculty and staff detailing the changes in the program,

As many of you know, Dr. Edra Bogle has been the Coordinator of Women's Studies for several years, serving with Dr. Rosemary Killam as the "keepers of the flame." In fact, this year the two have organized and administered a UCRS course in Women's Studies that has involved men and women faculty from all over campus. That course was heavily subscribed and enormously successful as a survey of women's issues. I'm sorry that not more people on campus knew of it.

Because of other professional commitments, and probably because Drs. Bogle and Killam have wearied of carrying so much of the burden alone, neither feels that she can continue to make the commitment of time and energy involved in successfully furthering Women's Studies on the campus.

I am delighted to report, however, that Dr. Barbara Rodman of the department of English has agreed to serve as Coordinator of Women's Studies. As Coordinator of Women's Studies, Dr. Rodman will oversee the development of an expanded women's studies program on campus including the offering of the survey course, will serve as the coordinator for the SCWSA conference, and the College will seek to support her efforts with graduate student assistance. Dr. Rodman brings great enthusiasm and a wealth of experience to this new assignment. I look forward to an exciting year in Women's Studies as a result of the combined efforts of all of you.

We urge all of you to be involved.

While the change in the program's top administrator got most of the attention, the memo contained also contained a crucial element that would help the program attract and retain quality students: a commitment from the College to fund graduate assistants to help Dr. Rodman in her efforts.

In response to student inquiries about the reasons she was no longer running the program, Dr. Bogle sent out a letter to all students, faculty, and staff that had been involved with Women's Studies. In Bogle's letter to the class and faculty, dated May 11,

1994, her anger and disappointment were clear. She described the delays in getting approval for the SCWSA conference, her anger that Dean Bell was “unilaterally removing me from the position of conference chair,” the Dean’s decision not to use an office adjacent to Dr. Bogle’s for a Women’s Studies center, and the lack of complaints this raised. She ended by writing

As long as administrators feel free to reverse decisions of faculty groups at will, and as long as those groups do not object, Women’s Studies at UNT, and women’s issues in general, are going nowhere. When are women going to start supporting each other - in reality, not theoretically.

While Bogle strongly criticized women at UNT for not standing up to support each other, it must be noted that they were being given a choice between supporting the outgoing director or supporting the incoming director and the university’s first female dean of a college. Given this choice, many women could have felt they were supporting the future of women’s studies rather than honoring the past.

When asked for her opinion on why she had been removed, Dr. Bogle spoke of two possibilities. The first was the bitterness in the English department over the Lee-Duban feud, in which Bogle sided with Duban and Rodman with Lee. Bogle said that because of the “horrible” position Dean Bell had been put into regarding the English department’s battle, Bell may not have wanted to “make any waves in regards to women’s studies” (55).

The second possibility was much more troubling: Bogle speculated that Bell may have been advised not to have a lesbian in such a high-profile position. (53) This charge is a serious one. Many young straight women shy away from labeling themselves

feminists because of societal stereotyping of all feminists being gay. Women's Studies must be a leader in education on both the dangers of stereotyping and homophobia. Because homophobia is rampant in Texas, even in university settings, it is certainly feasible that some people would have preferred not to have a lesbian in any high profile position. But it must also be added that neither Dr. Bogle nor anyone else ever intimated that Dean Bell was in any way a source of homophobia. Women's Studies continued to welcome all students regardless of sexual preference, encourage scholarship on lesbians, and educate the campus on the need for inclusion. Dr. Rodman participated in the "Safe-Zone" program (later the "Ally" program) which was set up to give gay and lesbian students places where they could be accepted and open on campus.

Later in our interview, Dr. Bogle added another idea which reflected some sympathy for Dean Bell's predicament,

I'm going to make one really cynical statement [...] By the time that anyone's listening to this, maybe my prediction will have either worked or won't: I have sometimes wondered whether Dean Bell was hired as the first woman dean of the College of Arts and Sciences just to have all these "hot potatoes" tossed into her "lap" -- and there's been others later, such as the faculty salary situation right now -- so that she could fail, and then the administration could say, "See, a woman can't handle that kind of job after all." (69)

To those of us who believe that our highest university officials do not appreciate and reward the talents of women, this analysis rings true. But if it was the intent of the administration for Dean Bell to fail, they must have been disappointed: Bell's outstanding performance at UNT led to her next position as President of Wesleyan College in Georgia.

Whatever the reasons, Dr. Bogle felt her efforts were no longer appreciated,

So I finished out the semester: [I] had lunch with Barbara, told her that I would be willing to work with her on the conference if she had anything specific she wanted me to do [...] The only thing I ever heard back from her was that I got in my box the general call “If you want to volunteer to help out on some of these committees that have already been appointed, do so.” I have had nothing to do with Women’s Studies ever since. (53)

Women’s Studies at UNT had thus lost one of its founding foremothers, and the resulting bitterness and confusion led a student who had just entered the program to later describe it at this point as “a smoking pile of ruin.”

CHAPTER VI

DR. BARBARA RODMAN AND THE PERIOD FROM 1994-1997

Fears that Women's Studies at UNT would go nowhere due to the lack of support of women for each other would soon be put to rest, as by the Fall of 1994 student involvement in the program was beginning to flourish. Beth Eakman met the other women that would make up the Women's Studies Roundtable, a student group she had formed to promote Women's Studies. The connections between these students, their instructors, and the material of Women's Studies, would lead to an explosion of interest and activism in feminist causes, including promoting Women's Studies at UNT. Eakman describes the beginning:

In the Fall of 94, I took Dr. Nichols' course. I took Special Problems with Barb [...] I also had a course with Dr. Chadwick-Joshua on feminist criticism. Then I had Dr. Nichols' class on women's literature, and that was by far the most influential class I had at North Texas because of the fact that it hooked me up with Gretchen Esely and Carla Kittinger and Stacy Erickson and a lot of people who became the sort of central nexus of the Women's Studies Roundtable. I had been told at this point that Chancellor Hurley said that no one was interested in women's studies, and this class was jammed to the rafters, and everyone was obviously extremely interested. Gretchen and I hit it off really quickly became close friends. She switched her major to women's studies that semester as well, and we started the Women's Studies Roundtable. (O.H. 35)

Gretchen Esely also described this class and its effect on her academic career and her life:

I had a bachelor's degree in Literature, but I was also interested in the impact of history and philosophy on written works [...] My first semester in graduate school, I took a course in American Women Novelists. I was

exhilarated by the manner in which the class was taught as well as the works we read. We sat in a circle and discussed different elements of the work, different theoretical interpretations, or the relevance of historical data, feminism, and reader response.

It was also in that class that I met Beth Eakman, who was enrolled as UNT's only Women's Studies graduate student. After speaking with her about the Interdisciplinary Master's degree she was constructing, I decided to change my major [...] It was as if the clouds parted and a shaft of light hit me to reveal my path. I suppose one might say I had an epiphany [...] There is work to be done, and I am a woman on a mission. (Eakman, Esely, and Behnken 122)

Eakman continued the story, saying Dr. Nichols class

[...] was so great that we would talk about the literature. People would be standing around for, like, hours after the class still discussing it. They had to like practically chuck us out the room because we were all so very much interested in it. I started out the semester as a women's studies major... that was my second semester in women's studies [...] We had a few undergraduates but it was mostly graduate students. it was a really large class by the way. There were a lot of people that were really interested in it and wanted to ask me about it. I met Stacy Erickson, who had said, "I always wanted to be a women's studies major but they don't have a fellowship here and I need the financing." [...] and that definitely got me thinking. (O.H. 39-40)

Stacy Erickson would quickly become a key member of the Roundtable by compiling and publishing the first newsletter devoted to women's studies at UNT. (A move suggested by Dr. Nichols in her memo on October 12, 1990.) Eakman described how the newsletter started:

Stacy came to me and said, "You know, I've always wanted to write a women's studies newsletter." And you know me, taking the authority on myself, as I normally did, I just went, "Wonderful! You're the editor! Write a newsletter!" (O.H. 40) [...] a newsletter which was obviously, if you've read it, The Gaze -- excellent, really well done [...] That probably gave the Roundtable as much credibility... The main thing that really made people pay attention to us in the first year were the newsletter, and the Professing Women Award. (O.H. 41-42)

Erickson also fondly remembered this meeting,

I think that it was in Dr. Nichols' class. In fact, I think that it was the Twentieth Century American Literature class. Beth was there, and Gretchen, I believe, was in there, so it just all came about naturally that way [...] I just remember the conversation with Beth, standing outside after class and telling her that I always wanted to do it, and she thought it was a great idea. I don't remember at what point after that conversation that I actually started compiling it, but it probably was after the first initial Roundtable meeting, I would think. In the early newsletters I would include the notes, or the minutes from the meetings. (14)

She also explained the reason for the title:

The Gaze. I picked the title because I thought it was our way of kind of turning the vision around to the women's perspective, that we were now gazing on the world, and academics in particular. (14)

Stacy described the specifics of the newsletter and the process of getting it out.

[...] it's not a newsletter of activism necessarily, unless it's in terms of academics. It's about women's studies[...] I had no idea what the basic format of a newsletter was, I was just learning Word Perfect, so... (Laughter) I included calls for papers, and I included Roundtable minutes. I think that I also included poetry. I leaned more towards the creative the first couple of years, creative works on females, and interviews. That became sort of a focus for me, and it just seemed to happen naturally. I don't remember making it a conscious choice necessarily. I think I interviewed Dr. Nichols first [...] since I'd never interviewed before it was hard to get too much into their personal lives without feeling nosy. But Dr. Nichols was telling me how she went to school in New Orleans, I think it was Tulane, I guess. And she told me that she just wandered the streets, just like Edna Pontellier does in The Awakening, and I remember she said she just sat at a restaurant and drank beer and ate clams or something. I just loved that picture of her, being free and drinking beer and eating clams. (laughs) Maybe it was oysters. But it just gave me an image of her. She told me about her childhood, so I got to see her as a person instead of just an instructor, and also to find out how pivotal she was in beginning the Women's Studies Program. That was what I mostly got from that interview. (14-16)

Erickson then described the unsystematic method of distribution:

[...] we would distribute it at the meetings. I would put them in the boxes in the English Department. I would leave some with different people, and they would distribute to like Texas Woman's University, the Collective. It was very unorganized. There was no master mailing list or anything like that [...] The people that I would hand it to would give a good response, like "This is great that you've done this." Occasionally, I've gotten E-mails and notes over the years of people saying "This is really great. Thank you for putting me on the mailing list," or "I really enjoyed this issue." [...] But it's sort of a lonely activity in a way. But it's been very important to me, and has given me an awfully good feeling of accomplishment. (16-17) Cook: It's really been helpful because I think that that's one thing that we don't have on this campus. One of the professors told me, "Even the feminist faculty don't know each other." There's not a lot of interconnection, because people are so busy in their own fields. Erickson: Yes. And I think that's kind of my motivation, and I know that was probably Beth's motivation in beginning the Professing Women Award, was to let everyone know who we are, acknowledge each other on campus, to create sort of a connection for that. (18)

The Gaze would become an institution, as Erickson continued publishing through 1997. Interviews were also an integral part of the newsletter, including those with professors Dr. Nichols, Dr. Platt, Dr. Gloria Cox of Political Science and Dr. Jill Rhea from Communications Studies, and other women working in the community, such as a rape crisis counselor.

Gretchen Esely described the situation when she entered the program:

The status of Women's Studies in the fall of 1994 had been rather chaotic. There had been no faculty advisor, no graduate students [...] there were some undergraduate minors, but we had no way of tracking them. Everyone was plodding along individually, doing the best they could. With an energetic, newly appointed faculty coordinator, and with the help and encouragement of the College of Arts and Sciences, Beth and I, brimming with enthusiasm, rolled up our sleeves and got to work. (Eakman, Esely, and Behnken 123)

Eakman continues the story of the Roundtable's development,

Gretchen and I had talked about it before. We made an announcement, or I made an announcement, in that class that for anybody who was interested in women's studies, we were going to have a meeting. I tried to get some people from other parts of campus, and I sent out a mailing. Barb hooked me up with some names and phone numbers -- this is what people are remembering about me getting on the phone -- and we met at... what is the name of that little coffee shop over on University? Oh, the Cappuccino Cafe. We had our first meeting there, and it was a real hodgepodge of people [...] (O.H. 40)

The participants in this charter meeting with Eakman were Amy Akins, an undergraduate double-majoring in Philosophy and English, Haley Bates, president of the UNT Craft Guild, Tiffany Cannon, a recent graduate who was one of the co-founders of the Women's Collective, Sandra Councilman, a graduate student in English who had been Dr. Bogle's assistant while she had been the director, Carla Kittinger, a graduate student in English and Rhetoric who was the president of the English Honor Society, graduate students in English Stacy Erickson and Gretchen Esely, undergraduate English majors Julie Lei, Melanie Pierson, Kate Yarborough, and Paula Frank, and Patrice Harper and Linda McGreevy, graduate students in Philosophy with an Environmental Ethics concentration.

The talented women who attended noted a variety of reasons: one wrote "I'm interested in women authors (American and ethnic in particular), critical theory, and the current eco-feminist movement." Another wrote that she was "A senior English major looking for a graduate program that teaches women's issues without male bashing." Some expressed interest in adding new classes to the schedule, such as one who noted being "Interested in UNT developing courses on women's theology, spirituality, philosophy, and the principles of femininity and masculinity." Another student said, "I would be

interested in showing the university some of the diverse interests of its students, and perhaps suggest how the university could offer classes in these fields. I would also simply like to get the information to those students who are interested!”

Amy Akins wrote

I am interested in relating female-based issues to the human condition as a whole. I do not subscribe (as of yet?) to any essentialist viewpoint. I have been involved in NOW (local and Texas), Pro-choice group on UNT?TWU campus, women’s collective, and directed (?) the student subcommittee of the UNT Commission on the Status of Women.

Another felt,

Considering the low level of knowledge and the high level of negative stereotypes in feminism and women’s studies, I’m particularly interested in enlightenment. I’m also looking for equality in the classroom (a pipe-dream?)

One student had practical advice,

I would like to suggest that this group do become an officially recognized student organization. At the very least, other students looking for this group might find us in the directory, also any one looking for information about women or women’s studies for journalistic or scholarly purposes might come to this group, it could lead to free advertisement. Maybe being an organized group would allow us to have a place to post things.

Still another noted her dissatisfaction with the standard curriculum:

I’m always seeking a diversity of views and information in course work. Many core classes concentrate on one group of writers and I want to read works by women, blacks, Latinos, etc. I started as a History graduate student, my grad advisor asked why I took a class in ‘Women Writers,” they thought it was wrong, because people would be offended by a class called ‘male writers.’ He doesn’t get it, and I’m not sure how far that problem extends.

One of the first issues the Roundtable would deal with was the familiar debate between academics and activism. While many feel women’s studies is an inherently

activist academic field, Eakman and others were also concerned with being taken seriously as academics. She describes the discussion at the first meeting:

There were quite a few of the Philosophy majors at that point who were kind of interested in eco-feminism, and that group really did not stick with us at all. There was a woman... [Linda McGreevy] She was interested in, like, literally marching to Dr. Hurley's office. I knew going into this particular project that I wanted us to be strictly academic, and not an activist organization [...] I mean a lot of thinking had went into this decision. The university had been able to brush us off because they were saying that we were not an academic discipline; that we were an activist group, and as long as we were not an academic discipline, they didn't have to fund us or take us seriously, and they could brush us off as a bunch of radicals. What I thought was I wanted to be a member of activist groups, but I wanted to have a strictly academic group to give us some credibility. That was one of my first challenges in sort of asserting my leadership and saying, "No, that's not what this is about. If you want to start a group like that, that's great, more power to you. Certainly I'll be there." But I really spent my first semester of the Roundtable repeating that we had to keep them separate so that we could get the university to stand up take notice of us. (O.H. 40-41)

While Eakman would very shortly make good on her pledge, "certainly I'll be there" (for the activist groups), the Roundtable would maintain its focus on academic issues. Gretchen Esely eloquently stated the case for reform versus radicalism, writing:

Audre Lorde wrote, "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house." While we feel this quote applies to defeating sexism, we do not feel that it applies to academia, per se. First of all, Women's Studies does not seek to "dismantle the house." Women's Studies is not exclusive, but inclusive. We don't wish to destroy the house of academia, we merely want to build additions, make it stronger, safer. We want to transform the master's house into an equal opportunity co-op. Secondly, we attempt to use whatever tools or resources available to us. (Eakman, Esely and Behnken 122)

In a July 1994 memo to Provost Brownell Dean Bell wrote that although there was a Women's Studies minor on books, "[...] there hasn't been the commitment to

ensuring that course offerings were in place to secure the minor for students who might be interested.” Bell’s memo suggested that classes that were currently being offered in Political Science, RTVF, Communication Studies, and others be added to the list.

In the Fall of 1994 Eakman began working closely with Dr. Rodman to promote Women’s Studies. She described the thinking behind what became one of Women’s Studies most successful traditions, the Professing Women awards:

I was meeting with Barb about once a week at that point to just to sort of... I don’t know. We were just meeting about once a week and talking about getting things off the ground. I came in and answered the phone in her office. I just wanted to do some women’s studies stuff and kind of get it off the ground. We had discussed how we could get these people together. We knew that there were people that were interested in women’s studies; we knew that there were courses out there that were being taught that were including women’s interests; and we just wanted to get all these people in the same room. That’s when we just hatched the idea of giving awards to people, giving a certificate to people who were doing this sort of out there by themselves floating along with no central body of cohesive women’s studies. (O.H. 42) [...] Suzanne Green designed the certificates, and we copied them. We sent out letters that said “Thanks for being a part of women’s studies. Please come and be honored.” And we did so.

Cook: And what was the response of the professors?

Eakman: Oh, they were thrilled! We got letters. People were just thrilled, and it was amazing. We had it in the Golden Eagle Suite, and I called the “cookies and punch” people and said, “Give us cookies and punch. We need this suite.” We found a guitar player from the music department who sat in the corner and played classical guitar. It was just right after the Thanksgiving break, and the weather was cold, and we had hot cider. It was just the most festive, wonderful, warm gathering. People were so touched, and we had a huge turnout. I wish I could give you an idea of how many people came, Barb could probably give you a better idea, I was just sort of overwhelmed by the response. (O.H. 43-44)

The awards ceremony had definitely achieved its goal:

That definitely sort of glued us together a bit more, and for the university and everyone who saw this, it gave them the impression that we were so much more together than we actually were. Barb and I together, making

phone calls from her office, had managed to come across as looking like this really well-organized (chuckle) organization [...] Dean Bell came, Ona Tolliver [head of Women's Programs] came, and Kathryn Cullivan. [Assistant Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences] People looked around the room and were, like, "Wow, this is really something! This is not just sort of an abstract idea." It was suddenly a concrete group, a concrete movement and a concrete thing to these people. So, that when they thought of women's studies, they could associate it with a large group of people. That was a main goal, so we definitely accomplished that with that. We had copies of The Gaze there that we handed out, and we got everyone on a mailing list, an intercampus mailing list, that got The Gaze on a regular basis. (O.H. 44-45)

The mailing list would become one of the items that was most crucial to the success of Women's Studies at UNT, giving the program immediate access to interested parties that had heretofore been very hard to get together.

As more work was being done, finding a space to work was again becoming an issue. Eakman described the drive for office space and recognition:

Stacy Erickson was doing this [The Gaze] from her home computer. We didn't even have a women's studies office at that time. This was me sitting in Barb's office during Barb's off hours. I had to go downstairs and get a key to let me into her office, because I didn't even have a key to her office. We really managed because we got lucky with a lot of things, and just out of sheer grit and determination pulled off some really professional looking stuff. (O.H. 45)

Eakman also described this time in "Strictly Academic:"

A core of graduate students - probably six or eight people other than Gretchen and me - held things together. We did stuff the university liked. We maintained 4.0s, read at conferences, published papers, received awards and scholarships. We mentored undergrad students. By the end of that one semester, we had attracted enough of the administrations notice to get a new office space and a small amount of funding. The dean of Arts and Sciences asked to meet with us personally to discuss plans for developing the program. The academics versus activism thing seemed to be working. Gretchen and I made a conscious decision to stick with it. (2)

The hard work was beginning to pay off:

Over the winter break, Barb pulled strings and begged and pleaded and basically did everything in her power to get us into that office. If you remember, that office that was in the English building next to the stairs, sort of a closet. So we had that for the spring semester. That was one of our great achievements, was getting a place so that when we had people who when they thought of women's studies, they thought, "Okay, Professing Women award," and they could think of a phone number, and we could say "We are now located in this office." If people were interested in women's studies they had a place to go. This didn't happen immediately over the winter break. It took a little while. I don't remember exactly when we got into that office, but we went downstairs, and we pilfered furniture from the basement. You're probably beginning to get a picture, what we didn't have we faked, and we just sort of made do. (O.H. 46-47)

Like Jean O'Barr, who twenty years earlier realized and espoused the need for women to claim authority and knowledge, the women were now outpacing the university hierarchy. Eakman put it simply:

We conferred authority, not authority, we conferred legitimacy upon ourselves because we couldn't wait for the university to do it anymore. (O.H. 47)

The women moved into a room that had been being used as a storage closet, put up a sign that said "Women's Studies" and began working. The sign attracted a lot of attention, and many students stopped by and picked up lists of recommended courses. There was also negative attention from some in the English department (which occupied most of the building). Male graduate students especially seemed critical, claiming Women's Studies was political, not academic. Eakman described their response to these criticisms,

Whichever one of us happened to be in a more diplomatic mood that day would smile and explain. "Women's Studies is an 'area study' like Asian studies, or American Studies, or Popular Culture studies. It's an

Interdisciplinary point of inquiry” [...] I think they were expecting psychotic harpies and were stymied by our calm, scholarly explication. (“Strictly” 2)

The numbers of women who came to the Roundtable and the office with questions proved that there was a need for these services:

[...] people came to us and said “I’m interested in taking women’s studies as a minor” [...] most of the time we did not have answers. We could however, tell these people, “Look, we’ll get on the phone, and we’ll find you the person in the Philosophy department who will find you some courses toward your minor that will apply. We’ll find the person that can help you.” (O.H. 47)

Women coming to the group with an unforeseen and unpleasant problem helped prove that Eakman had been serious when she pledged support for any activist group which might form.

We had a ton of undergraduates come to us with sexual harassment complaints. That was an unforeseen avenue, and we did not necessarily have answers [...] (O.H. 47)

While they might not have had the answers, they certainly were able to define the scope of the problem,

By the end of the semester Gretchen and I could tell you which History professor carried nudie pictures in his wallet and which group of English professors was under investigation for taking advantage of drunk undergraduate women - the predators were actually working as a team [...] I’m still not sure why these young women thought we could help them. Maybe we were more approachable as graduate students than their professors. Maybe they had heard that Women’s Studies was about making sure that women got a fair shot at an education in the patriarchal structure of traditional academia. (Eakman, “Strictly” 2)

The young women told the graduate students about nightmarish experiences in the classroom with professors who disrespected women in the curriculum and in the classroom:

One young woman, a senior-level student, told us about taking an honors humanities course called “Great Books” - one of the administration’s pet projects. When asked at the end of the semester what books or authors the students might suggest for inclusion in future classes, this young woman remarked that she would have liked to have read at least one book by a woman. The professor pronounced, “I don’t want to get into that crap.” (Eakman, “Strictly” 2)

Other professors thought it was their job to amuse their students with stories about how ugly women were: in an oral history interview a student told me the story of an English professor who every day told stories of how disgusting his own wife was.

Eakman also heard comments of this nature,

Another woman told us about her experience in an upper division English course that covered Jonathan Swift’s Gulliver’s Travels. After reading a passage describing the crude giant Brobdignagian women as loud, fractious, and smelly, the male professor remarked to the class that that described most women. His comment got a laugh from the class. (“Strictly” 2)

While many men claim that this is just “good natured fun,” the effect on women was dramatic, and silencing. The woman who related the story of the remarks concerning Swift’s book “said that she felt like any comment she made from that point forward - scholarly or otherwise - would just serve to reinforce the professor’s comment.” (Eakman, “Strictly” 2) Purposely or not, the professor had succeeded in silencing the student.

While the Roundtable had committed themselves to academics over activism, as Eakman relates,

The line defining what was strictly academic had begun to blur. Clearly, these women's academic experience was being compromised. Whether these women did not feel equally entitled to join in a class discussion, were being sexually pursued by a professor, or were just generally subject to a professor who thought of women as lesser, their access to education was unequal. That was an academic issue. But if we - as Women's Studies students - tried to address some of these problems, we knew that we would be seen by the university as activists [...] We had come to far. How could we risk the continued support of the administration for our struggling program? [...] We questioned our commitment to representing women's studies as strictly academic. But what could we really do? ("Strictly" 3)

Later, the group learned found a compromise between academics and activism, as Eakman termed it "advocacy by way of scholarly rebuttal: the letter." ("Strictly" 3) They wrote well, and the letters seemed to get results, as Eakman wrote:

Who knew that a little bit of rhetorical strategy and a letter-head with the words "Women's Studies" on top could accomplish so much. We wrote lots of letters. ("Strictly" 3)

But to this day, Eakman remembers the women she felt like she didn't help, and worries about the new students and what their experience will be like:

I wish we had known what good letter writers we were earlier on. It might have helped some of the young women who came to talk to us about their classroom experiences. I think about those girls a lot. I teach writing at San Diego State now and I see those eighteen year old women in my classes and wonder if they feel like they are an important part of their own academic experience. I wonder, if they speak up in their other classes. If not, I hope they have someone who will speak up for them. ("Strictly" 3)

The debate, both internal and external, over academics versus activism would be solved in part when an activist group, the Women's Collective, entered the fight, as Eakman described:

Kimberly Olsen... another thing I should probably go back to is that at our last meeting of the Roundtable in the fall of 1994, Kimberly Olsen showed up, looking like quite the little radical, I might add, dressed in, like, army

fatigues with her little backpack, you know, the one that has all the buttons on it, and stickers and stuff? [...] She had come because she was trying to get together a group on campus that would later become the Collective, and she wanted to come to us to sort of hook up and help her get them on their feet. We talked a lot to her, and as you can see, a lifetime friendship came out of it. But the Roundtable and the Collective would go on to become basically two sides of the same coin. We were the academic side, and they were the activist side, and it was really a wonderful coalition, because we had so many people that wanted to do both. But it was so important that the Roundtable stay, as far as the university was concerned, separate. Our Roundtable constitution that is on file with the university specifically states that we are a non-political, academic organization. So, we really wanted to stick with that, and yet, we were really missing something [...] so the Collective came about at that point, and that spring when we were starting to do stuff in our office the Collective was really getting on its feet as well, with Kimberly. (O.H. 49)

The first of many tasks the groups would tackle together was convincing a bar adjoining the campus to remove the pornography that had been on permanent display in its men's room. The women pointed out the obvious danger of date rape by men who made more frequent trips to the porn covered restroom the more they drank. Todd Overman, the editor of the campus newspaper, drew a cartoon to accompany an editorial saying the porn should stay up in the name of free speech. Eakman wrote the reply, identifying herself as a member of the Collective.

I am writing in response to the editorial of February 23, entitled, "Naked Truth: Group Demanding Removal of Pictures from Rick's Place." The writer of this editorial vehemently defends the rights of adult males to view photographs of naked women. The photographs of naked women in the restroom at Rick's Place, the writer states unequivocally, "should absolutely not be removed."

Do adults have the right to view sexually explicit material? Yes. Does this solve the question of the appropriateness of the photographs displayed above the urinal at Rick's Place? No.

It is often tempting to oversimplify a situation when one has an incomplete understanding, to claim, for example, that this complex issue can be understood in terms of censorship.

The Women's Collective's opposition to these particular photographs, in fact, is not due to their "pornographic" nature. What the Collective (and many other groups) find objectionable is the combination: photos of naked women, alcohol, and a long, dark, walk home.

The previous editorial claims that women should not be offended by pictures that are in the men's room because only men see them. Why, if the photos are acceptable, are they displayed where women cannot see them? The obvious answer is that women - particularly women on dates - tend to be offended by seeing this image of women displayed publicly.

Women's groups are not the only ones concerned about the context of these photographs. Derek Lee, a Denton County probation officer who works with sex offenders says that "in my experience... the offenders themselves say that looking at erotica does contribute to sexual deviance: it is part of the cycle." Combined with alcohol, the scenario worsens: "Drugs, alcohol, and sexual assault go hand in hand because they lower everyone's inhibitions - men don't hear 'No,'" says rape crisis professional Donna Clayton of Friends of the Family. The viewers of the photos at Rick's Place may have their status as adults verified at the door; their status as potential sex offenders, however, is anyone's guess.

At best, these photographs of naked women displayed over a urinal demean and objectify all women: your mother, your sister, your girlfriend. At worse they contribute to the outright sexual assault which will happen to one in four American women during her lifetime: your mother, your sister, your girlfriend. So, next time you are at Rick's Place look around you. Count four women. Now, think about those photos in the men's restroom. They do not exist in a vacuum. They are one piece in a larger puzzle which includes alcohol, secrecy, and overwhelming statistics of violence against women. To reduce a complex societal problem to such a narrow understanding is not only poor rhetorical strategy but exactly the sort of attitude which perpetuates the cycle of violence against women.

To the apparent chagrin of the editor of the Daily, the owner of the bar relented, apparently in response to the idea that he would have to begin checking patron's criminal records to make sure it was legal for them to view the pornography. It was the first step in a wave of activism against sexual assault that would be led by the Collective. It was also a prime example of the power of Women's Studies to inform its students and inspire them to take this knowledge and put it to practical use. This was noted in the 1991

publication of the National Women's Studies Association Liberal Learning and the Women's Studies Major. In this work, a professor relates the story of one of her female students, Marguerite. The student has been reading Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own, in which the heroine is not allowed inside the university library because she is a woman. Marguerite has the opposite problem, she has forgotten about the time, it is now dark outside, and safety concerns make her feel trapped *inside* the library. While waiting for an escort she notices that no women are coming and going on their own, and is thrilled when the professor tells her she can write about this phenomenon for class. But the professor wonders, "How will all those other women in the lobby of the library understand their confinement? Which class in this vast university will ever address - or even acknowledge - the fundamental fact that a woman alone cannot go to the library here without risk after dark?" She is also partly exhilarated for precipitating "a moment of consciousness-raising which must be replicated an untold number of times before it will result in a world in which Marguerite can leave the library alone at midnight if she wants - and she, too, will now help replicate that moment." To the authors, (and to me) this "is why women's studies exists. The library incident exemplifies how theory and experience work together to transform the student's sense of self and her relation to the world [...]"

The moments of empowerment are initiated when, as in Marguerite's case, women replace their internalized acceptance of feminine dependency with a feminist awareness that enables them to critique the conditions of their lives - and to work to change them" (1-2).

The fight against sexual assault was the beginning of a change in the attention given to this issue at UNT, and of a partnership between the Roundtable and Collective which would benefit both groups, as Eakman related:

I was really swamped that semester, so Gretchen ended up being our emissary to the Collective meetings. But the Collective made sure that we had a lot of people in the seats at our first “Women’s Herstory Month” lecture series. We just did kind of a side-by-side thing. They told us what they were interested in doing, we told them what we were interested in doing. (O.H. 50)

Eakman, Esely, Olsen, and Julie Behnken, who would later lead the Roundtable, were classmates that semester in the Women’s Studies course, taught for the first time by Dr. Rodman, who remembers

I taught the Women’s Studies class that Spring [...] I think you would have been in there, and Beth and Gretchen and Julie and a lot of those women [...] I really inherited the course that had been set up by Dr. Bogle and Dr. Killam. They brought in more outside speakers than I did. Because of the time frame, and trying to run the conference, coordinating outside speakers would have been too complicated, so I did somewhat more running the course myself. (33)

I asked Dr. Rodman “what were the differences between, for example, the course that you taught in Women’s Studies as opposed to just a literature course or whatever that involved women in it?”

Okay, well it’s very, very different in a couple of respects. One is the Women’s Studies course is interdisciplinary so the teacher is responsible for material that is not in your own area. You’re teaching things that might relate to the sciences, sociology, to history, to art, to music, which is why there’s a temptation to bring in a lot of outside speakers. It’s also I think more focused on activity, perhaps less on reading books [...] But one of the things that’s scary about it and one of the things that makes it difficult for women on a tenure track is it’s outside your field, so it’s hard to get credit for it first of all, and secondly, everybody else is suspicious about it: who is this non-sociologist, non-historian, non-scientist teaching these

things? As if an educated person might not have at least a passing familiarity with those principles. [...] One of the things I did was kind of reorganize the course then from my perspective to make it be an introduction to principles and methods rather than the subject matter itself. And to say to the students that I'm not going to teach it from Sociology or History, I'm going to give you what I think is a Women's Studies perspective: What questions are raised that are different? How does this feminist perspective affect how you approach any field of study? And I think that was fairly successful. (34-35)

Kimberly Olsen noted the importance of this valuing of the female, saying what she liked about the course was seeing women as the center, not on the periphery. Rodman had commented on this aspect of the class as well:

The other thing I've discovered is just valuing the female, giving women students the chance to speak in a class where, if there are men they are in the minority, and they tend to be very sympathetic, supportive men who are sensitive to the issues [of gender]. You have a whole different class. (37)

Beth Eakman also made note of her enjoyment of the class,

Oh, I loved that class. It was wonderful. The only thing I wish is that we had more and that it would not have been so broad in scope. We talked about so many different things. We talked about political aspects; we talked about spirituality; women's health issues; representation; theory. I wish that we had had a class for everyone of those things and had had a lot more time. It was such a neat class and it was so wonderful. My goal is to be a university professor, and that class really has given me a lot of inspiration for the sort of classroom I would like to have. (O.H. 72)

Julie Behnken was also a student in this course, which she described:

I had gone back to school looking for 'something else,' and Women's Studies is where I found it. This Women's Studies survey course was unlike any course I had ever taken. It was small, only about 12 people, we sat in a circle, everyone had the opportunity to speak, we asked questions in new ways, and questioned what I previously thought unquestionable. The more I read, the more we discussed and questioned, the more I wanted to know. I was beginning to 'see,' my Self, and a more inclusive mode of thought. Beth and Gretchen were also in the class, which was so lucky for

me - I was so inspired by both of them and what they were doing. What Gretchen describes as 'the clouds parting and a shaft of light,' hit me as well in what I would call finally 'getting a BIG clue' and a general feeling of 'Yes, that's it!' Between Beth, Gretchen, and Barb Rodman, they had sold me on Women's Studies and in no time I was heading for my Master's, and getting involved wherever I could. (Eakman, Esely and Behnken 125)

The impact the course had on her would later lead to Rodman and Behnken laughingly calling Behnken "the poster child for women's studies." Behnken addressed this in her Master's thesis.

What I read in women's studies exposed me to a new manner of writing, to a new context. Not only did I read scholarly arguments written from a different perspective - a feminist perspective - showing me an interdisciplinary, boundary-crossing mode of thought, but as a reader, I read differently. There were stories of personal experiences, reflections on what it meant to live in the world as a female. This writing moved me. It had power, the power that comes from experiencing what life has to offer - what life hurls at you - and striving to define oneself, to maintain, and to make sense of it all. Theory and political awareness balance and enhance my own experience, giving what was once remote and theoretical a deep, personal meaning, while at the same time, providing a sound, new foundation for confronting and affecting both personal and social change. (Thesis 1-2)

One of the most important lessons of feminism is that the personal is political, an understanding that is extremely motivational, as Behnken related:

In light of this connection of the "public" to the "private," and because I believe that our individual lives and experiences come together to make up our society that, in turn, provides the context for our experience, I am unwilling to set apart what is personal from the political. (Thesis 2)

Another student in the course was Sara-Jayne Parsons, a graduate student in Art History. She described the impact of the course on her academic life:

[...] I felt like maybe I needed to work a little bit harder about opening up and really attempting to speak in class. So, speaking in class was tough to

deal with at first, but in my art history seminars, at some stage I always felt like I was speaking, and then I went back to feeling self-conscious again (chuckle). It's like you don't speak or you speak too much.

But when I took the Women's Studies class, which is where I met the Roundtable people, then there were more voices. There were five or six other voices speaking, and it seemed to me that it was a much more relaxed atmosphere within the class. Everybody seemed to have...I'm not going to say their own agenda, but it was very clear to me that there was room for everyone in the class. A lot was getting said and discussed, but that there really was room for everyone. There weren't sort of long embarrassing moments of silence, like I had experienced in some of my art history seminars, where in that situation I felt like the teacher had really sort of set boundaries on class participation and how we would speak. So, things changed in a sense when I took the women's studies class, in terms of how I then went back to my other seminar classes, and I would perhaps question the teacher, or question other people in the group. Before it had been a matter of just speaking up, answering a question posed [by the professor]. I think I then realized that I did have the ability, and didn't sound stupid. I had the ability that I could speak up a little more. (85-86)

Parsons also noted how much she enjoyed being able to focus on women artists:

I looked at images of women in advertising, in print magazines, that I felt were based on very traditional modes of expressing the female form, that were traditional to art history -- images of the nude and the female figure that maybe went back 500 years or something like that. I gave a slide presentation at one point where I guess did a little bit of analysis from a feminist perspective, looking at how these ads were perceived by, could be perceived by, male and female viewers, or thinking about why advertisers had used a woman in the context of the ad, what they were trying to sell. Most of the time it was sex (chuckle). Didn't matter if it was a car battery or, you know, a jug of gin, I guess I should say. But, yes, I worked on that, and at the same time, too, I think that I was starting to learn, or sort of open my eyes a little more to the role of women in art and art history. Previous to that [...] my eyes hadn't been opened to it [...] (86-87)

Along with the influence of the course, Parsons gave credit to Dr. Platt:

I thank Dr. Susan Platt for opening my eyes to that -- I really had not studied female artists, painters, sculptors, or anything like that. I'd had a sensitivity to female authors, but not really the work of female artists. So, it had become a period of awakening for me, just from the fact that I became a teaching assistant for Dr. Platt, and witnessed how she taught

twentieth century art history, and how she brought out the work of women artists and added that to the, sort of the canon of other great works of art that were studied for that time period. Then by taking the women's studies class on my own, and being removed from the art history department, it sort of validated in many ways what I had seen her doing or attempting to do. I realized that that was a viable option, a viable direction, and it wasn't offbeat, and it wasn't off the wall, and it wasn't weird. I learned that this kind of examination was going on in other disciplines and that there were other people, other women besides myself who maybe felt like they were sort of in an ambiguous situation of trying to research these people for whatever their discipline was -- research women involved with their discipline but not having the resources to do it. That's what I found, when I started to look at women artists, was that it had only been in the last couple of decades that women had been studied as artists in their own right. (87-88)

Other than the UCRS course, the list of courses available in Spring 1995 included Gender and Communication, Issues of Women in US History, Psychology of Women and two other Psychology classes dealing with marriage and sexuality, a health course in sexuality, a Criminal Justice class in family violence, 2 courses in Education dealing with diversity, 3 Economics courses, 2 Political Science courses in Constitutional Law, 2 Sociology courses and one in RTVF. Overall this made 19 courses, 6 of which dealt specifically and mainly with women's issues.

Rodman and the graduate students compiled a more comprehensive list of faculty teaching Women's Studies related courses or including women in their survey courses. These included Ann Jordan and Alicia ReCruz from Anthropology; Susan Platt in Art History; Michael Bruner, Mark DeLoach, and Jill Rhea in Communications Studies; Steven Southern from Criminal Justice; Shelley Cushman from Dance; Kari Battaglia, Robert Brown, Steven Cobb, Michael Greene, and Michael McPherson from Economics; Armenta Jacobsen from Education and Human Development; Edra Bogle, Jocelyn

Chadwick-Joshua, Patricia Cukor-Avilla, Brian May, Giles Mitchell, Martha Nichols, Alex Pettit, Kathryn Raign, Barbara Rodman, and Jim Tanner from English; John Eddy from Higher Education; Richard Golden, Constance Hilliard, and Donald Pickens from History; J. Reynolds from Human Resource Management; Rosemary Killam from Music; Robert Hood and Max Oelschlaeger from Philosophy; Gloria Cox, Frank Feigert, and Kimi King from Political Science; Charldean Newell from Public Administration; Harriet Aronson, A. Burke, Sharon Jenkins, and Linda Marshall from Psychology; Steve Fore, Gerry Veeder, and Justin Wyatt from RTVF; Gloria Contreras and JW Turner from Secondary Education; and Elizabeth Almquist, VJ Pillai, Rudy Seward, Dianna Torrez, and Norma Williams from Sociology.

The newly energized students from the Roundtable, Collective, and Women's Studies course would join with Dr. Rodman and help make March, Women's Herstory Month, 1995, one of the most successful and momentous times in the growth of Women's Studies at UNT. The first project on the schedule was a brown-bag lunchtime lecture series, to be held weekly throughout March. Eakman talked about the series and the involvement of Gretchen Esely, who was now coordinating the Roundtable along with Eakman:

Gretchen and I had talked about putting together a lecture series for the spring, so that was in the works. That was Gretchen's project. Professing Women had kind of been my project, and then this was Gretchen's. Gretchen was just, Gretchen was the "idea girl." She came in and had all these ideas. She was great about getting us really visible on campus. (O.H. 46)

The series featured two speakers each week and was a great success. An overflow crowd for a reading of the writings of courageous women fighting for women's rights throughout American history by Dr. Gloria Cox and Dr. Mary Alice Nye of the Political Science faculty forced the Union staff to scramble to bring down a wall partition and double the size of the room to accommodate the audience. Drs. Ann Jordan and Alicia ReCruz from Anthropology spoke to an even larger crowd during a lecture on Witchcraft. Drs. Michael McPherson and V.J. Pillai added their presentations to the series as well.

Eakman, Esely, and Behnken mentioned the impact of these events:

Events were extremely important to our fledgling program. We discovered that events promote Women's Studies, provide visibility and accessibility to what we do, get people involved, and give us opportunities to work with other groups on campus through co-sponsorship or recognition. Events also act as an "umbrella," uniting people from different disciplines and fields. Many times instructors or professors teach feminist theory or women as subjects in their separate disciplines, but feel isolated, as if they were the only feminists on campus. Through our sponsored events, we were able to introduce these individuals to each other. Some have gone on to collaborate on projects, publication, research, and courses. (127)

The month was not entirely free of problems. One week featured an excellent program put on by two of UNT's talented African-American women professors, Dr. Jocelyn Chadwick-Joshua from English, and Dr. Constance Hilliard from History. This lecture provided an example of the problems student groups have faced when booking events at the Union, as a last-minute schedule change meant that people looking for the lecture were instead greeted by the sight of flowing blood as the room was being used for a blood drive; about half of the original audience never made it to the lecture. Later in the semester, another Roundtable event was moved because, in the words of one student,

“Chancellor Hurley wanted to show a cowboy film in the Lyceum.” A by-product of these scheduling changes and other problems was a rift between the Roundtable and Women’s Programs, which was in charge of booking the rooms for the events. In defense of Women’s Programs it must be noted that they obviously were not in a position to overrule the chancellor, or the Union staff which puts top priority on attracting outside companies, and their money, to the Union. It is probably important to note that the official name is the “University Union,” not the “Student Union,” and no student groups are treated with the deference given to businesses.

However, this was not the first or last disagreement between the student groups and Women’s Programs, as Eakman related:

We were both at that time -- both the Collective and the Roundtable -- trying to do a lot of work through Women’s Programming with the university because they had the money, and they had the funding that we needed. We were under the impression at the time that we would have the money to carry out what we were doing without any strings attached, and that did not turn out to be the case. We both, the Collective and the Roundtable, almost simultaneously realized that we were being used, or certainly our feeling was we were being used by University Women’s Programming as free labor, basically. (O.H. 50)

One of the problems which distressed the students the most was the fact that the name of the organization was consistently left off the list of sponsoring organizations on flyers and posters advertising events for women co-sponsored by the Roundtable. This even occurred at some events of which the Roundtable had basically been the sole organizer. This particular stress was a result of what earlier Women’s Studies practitioners at San Diego State had called “bureaucratic bullshit.” in the midst of fighting for university recognition, it was not enough to put on a great event that helped

and enlightened a large group of women, it was also vitally important for the promotion of Women's Studies that the group be given credit for the work it had done.

Tensions between the student groups and university programs continued for the next couple of years, although later, as improvements were made in Women's Programs, some Collective members would say they had no problem being used as free labor as long as the programs their labor supported were worthwhile.

On March 23, 24, and 25, of 1995, UNT hosted the South Central Women's Studies Association Regional Conference. By hosting the conference many UNT students were able to take part by volunteering, attending, or presenting their own work or research. The conference program gave special thanks to Dean Nora Kizer Bell, Dean Suzanne Le Breque of the School of Restaurant and Hospitality Management, Eleanor McIntire of CCECM, and Arts and Sciences Lab Manager Will Clark. The program committee also thanked "D'Arlene Ver Duin, Suzanne Green, and Julie Lei for their arduous work and moral support, as well as Gretchen Esely and Beth Eakman of the Women's Studies Roundtable and Kimberly Olsen of the Women's Collective for their efforts in rounding up volunteers and in offering all manner of support where needed." Also pointed out as deserving of thanks were volunteers Julie Behnken, Sarah Cox, Ann McCullars, Kim Morales, Sara Oglesby, Sara-Jayne Parsons, and Priscilla Ybarra.

On the academic side of the conference Jocelyn Chadwick-Joshua chaired a discussion of women of color and feminist literary criticism which included graduate students Dennis Evans and Amy Birge; Beth Durodoye, Demetria Ennis, and Bertina Hildreth made up a panel to discuss African-American women in education; Nancy Estes

of the UNT Police facilitated a panel on criminal and disruptive behavior by women which featured Dean of Students Dena Bruton-Claus and Annetta Ramsey; Sonia Rodriguez spoke on a panel on student groups and diversity; Helen Leath read her fiction; Charlotte Wright, Laura Kennelly, and Vicky Santiesteban read their poetry. Presenting papers were Lisa Schleffer and Karen Wall on Women in Film; Amy Akins and Tiffany Cannon on Androgyny; Tracy Kalkwarf, Mary Georgevich, Lidan Lee, and Stacy Erickson on women in British literature; Karen Weiller and Catronia Higgs, and Jacqueline Lambiase (who would later join the UNT faculty) on women in popular culture and the media; Julia Chaffe and Debra Leissner on womanist explorations of Edna Pontellier; Gerry Veeder, Francene Fields, and Hank Ballinger on female myths and archetypes; Beth Eakman, Suzanne Green, and Sandra Spenser on new feminist readings of Kate Chopin; Haj Ross, Moumin Quazi, Richard Williamson, and Sandra Councilman on women in literature; Michelle Brooks, Stacy Erickson, Angela Martin, and Greg Smith on African American women and literature; and Emma Hawkins, Lesli Favor, Steve Richey, John Gilman Malkin, and Gretchen Esely on issues of gender.

The amount and quality of the scholarship was undeniable. By all standards, the conference was a success. Dr. Rodman talked about the impact of the conference's success on Women's Studies at UNT:

Part of the importance of that conference, and I owe a lot of gratitude to Dr. Bogle and Dean Bell for getting that regional conference set up before I ever came on board. It called attention to us on campus, and it made our colleagues aware of us, and it made the university aware of us. We put our best face forward, and I really believe that was part of why we were able to get funding and get the support we've had. We had 200 people come gather here, crossing disciplines, and I think the evidence of interest in all

departments and disciplines was quite obvious. So that was really very good for us. (60)

It is likely that this event was the key moment up to this point for Women's Studies at UNT. Those skeptics who had claimed that Women's Studies was not about academics had been proven wrong, as scholars and students from throughout the south central region of the United States converged on campus. While Dr. Bogle had warned that it would be extremely difficult to host such a major conference without major institutional support, because of the close collaboration between Dr. Rodman and a very dedicated group of students, the conference was a success despite limited funding from the University. Rodman and her student assistants had pulled off a major feat, running a conference like professionals with what was basically a volunteer staff. Women's Studies at UNT had given the academic reputation of the university a major boost.

Another event that would grab a lot of attention was a performance series which took place before the lectures. Melissa Haynes was featured in a storytelling performance art piece which got front page coverage in the Denton record Chronicle. Another highlight was the appearance of Dallas performance artist/poet/activist Rosemary Meza, who put on a spirited and stunning performance before a large lunchtime crowd in the University Union. Eakman recalled this event:

[...] she was one of our poets. She's published. She is pretty well known throughout Dallas and has an excellent reputation. She's a Latina feminist poet, and we had hired her to come out -- or let's say we engaged her, because we didn't give her any money, to come out and perform her pieces during March of 1995. These performance pieces were about thirty minutes long, and they happened right before the lecture series, so people could either catch one or the other, or they could go from the performance to the lecture if they had time. And the performance series was in the One

O'clock Lounge in the University Union. Rosemary Meza came and set up and they had big stacks of speakers and she stood on a little platform right in the middle with a big microphone. She was this little tiny, unassasuming Latina woman, with a bow in her hair, might I add, and little red Keds sneakers. And she started off with her poetry, and she had a very powerful voice.

Cook: Did you have North Texas administration in the audience at this point?

Eakman: We had Ona Tolliver in the audience; we had Rosemary's elderly mother. We had, if you've ever been to the One O'clock Lounge during the lunch hour, you know that it's pretty much jammed to the rafters with students eating lunch. Of course, people are stopping to see what's going on, so it's pretty crowded. Then Rosemary started. Gretchen and I were sitting there with Ona, and I believe Kimberly was there. Frankly I don't even know who was there now, it was all sort of a blur.

But, yes, there were definitely members of the faculty stopping and watching, because she commands a great deal of attention as a speaker and as a leader. She's starting to throw in words like vagina and discussing the color of her mother's nipples. There's a sexual escapade in one of her poems which takes place in the backseat of a car. I won't go on but it gets pretty much more intense from there. Then she whips off her little denim shirt, and she's wearing a little cheerleading outfit underneath it, which had not been seen, with the word "PUSSY" written across the front of it in cut-out letters. And she's doing a cheer that goes "P-U-S-S-Y- pussy, pussy, pussy, pussy, pussy."

And I was stricken, I was pouring sweat, and I remember just thinking "Okay, we're not only going to have confirmed everyone fears that we are indeed complete nutcases, we're going to be expelled [chuckle] for using profanity loudly through one of the speakers in the One O'clock Lounge." I mean, there was, I believe one of the Black Student Caucus groups was over in sort of the terrace area that's just up from the One O'clock Lounge, and they were pretty noisy because they had their own little social meeting going on. They went silent. People who had been shooting pool over in the other room went silent, and were beginning to file out and see what this was. People were literally putting down their sandwiches. Some guy -- this I will never forget -- there had been a guy outside, one of the campus preachers, who had been yelling about Sodom and Gomorrah, who had come in, and was just frozen in his footsteps watching this display.

The fact is, she really is an excellent poet. When we saw the same type of thing later at Club Dada in Dallas it wasn't so jarring, but at the lunch hour at the One O'clock Lounge... Gretchen and I are just almost fainting, although I have to say Gretchen took it a little bit better than I

did. I was truly thinking... this was the semester I was going to finish my course work and was going to start working on my thesis, and I thought “Great ! I’m going to be expelled. It’s going to be on the front page of the paper!” Gretchen calmed me down by saying “No, it won’t be in the paper because she used too many nasty words that they can’t print.” (Laughter) I don’t really drink. I will have the occasional beer, but I had to go and slam a couple of drinks after that because I was just such a mess. We went to Barb immediately and were just like, “Barb, we’ve got to tell you before anybody else does. We have had an incident.” But surprisingly, we didn’t hear much of anything about it. I think it was so shocking that people were like “Okay, okay, great,” and just went on. Nobody really complained, nothing. (O.H. 57-60)

The other main event planned for the month was an art show which was managed by Sara-Jayne Parsons, a graduate student in Art History. The coordination went smoothly, and Parsons found a nice public space in the RTVF building. Unfortunately, one morning a professor entered the building with a student and decided that a podium with a small delicate piece of art was the proper place to begin spreading out his papers. When Parsons asked him to please not disturb or damage the artwork, the professor exploded. This was “his” building, and outsiders had no place in it. After verbally abusing Parsons, he left the scene.

Parsons filed a complaint about his behavior, leading to a string of letters in which the professor refused to take responsibility for his actions. First, he claimed it was she who had screamed at him; then, he attempted to justify his verbal attack first by saying he had “a naturally loud voice” later adding that this came from years of riding the New York City subway system; finally, he intimated that he and his student feared a physical attack, writing, “Your hands were slightly raised and my student and I did not know what you were going to do next.” To those of us who knew Sara-Jayne, the idea that she would

scream at anybody, much less threaten them with physical violence, was patently ridiculous. As Eakman and Esely noted in their response, “those of us who know her well find the description of her ‘outburst’ so thoroughly out of character that it causes us to doubt the accuracy of [the professor’s] entire response.” They also noted that this type of confrontation fit in with a pattern of anti-woman behavior: “In closing, as women, as women’s studies students, and feminists, we are unfortunately all too familiar with this type of treatment: silencing, verbal abuse, and being perceived as aggressive when acting in self-defense.”

Parsons never received an apology, and the professor was never held accountable for his actions. However, two years later, the professor made news again, this time for a racial slur against Black students, whom he sweepingly stereotyped as not attending classes regularly. While the Roundtable was discussing involvement in the new controversy, the old report was re-read, and a note from Gretchen Esely revealed that the pain of the incident had not healed, “Reading this again brings the old horror back. [The professor’s] behavior, his lame excuses, his shabby treatment of Sara-Jayne, and the sorrow we all felt that this took place during our event, ‘Celebrating Women.’”

While the students were making great progress, the emotional toll they were paying was a steep one. Eakman later warned others of this inherent risk:

I think that that is something that everybody that is involved in women’s studies really needs to keep in mind. There is a lot of opportunity, and it is exciting, and it’s thrilling, and it’s wonderful; but it can tempt you so easily to sacrifice yourself. When you do sacrifice yourself, when you sacrifice your sleep and your own time and your, sort of, intestinal fortitude to push something ahead, to bring something to life, it yields results. And that’s what Gretchen and I were seeing. In a big way, yes, we

were pushing and shoving and sacrificing our personal health, but we were seeing results. And that made it too tempting for us not to take it, not to overdo it. I overdid it... So, my great warning to everyone in a new and developing program is to be careful and remember that you can't change the world if you are at the "Peaceful Rolling Hills." (O.H. 64-65)

After a semester of great accomplishments despite great odds, the students would now ask that this hard and valuable work be rewarded. After having proven the value of and interest in Women's Studies, on May 4, 1995, Eakman and Esely finished a report on Women's Studies which documented the progress, and mapped the future.

The National Women's Studies Association reports that Women's Studies programs are rapidly increasing nationwide. In fact, since its inception in 1969, the academic discipline of Women's Studies has grown exponentially. To meet this growing demand, the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of North Texas requested that we analyze the current status of women's studies programs on national, regional, and internal levels so that UNT might improve the efficiency of the existing Women's Studies area to best serve the needs of this growing number of students. Our findings will demonstrate that UNT is in a unique position to attract potential students in this expanding field.

We consider UNT to be an exceptional choice for potential Women's Studies students in the South central region for the following reasons: Prime regional location; Academic courses presently offered; Interdisciplinary approach; Dynamic student organizations and activities.

Women's Studies at UNT experienced a noticeable increase in the Spring semester of 1995. The SCWSA conference, held in March, gained considerable recognition for both Women's Studies and UNT.

Other significant additions to student and faculty interest in Women's Studies include the following: 500% increase in graduate enrollment in Women's Studies; Two new student organizations (Roundtable and Collective); *The Gaze*, a Women's Studies newsletter; Faculty and student participation in Women's History Month events; Distinguished Speaker Series; Performance/Visual Artists' Series; Reception for Bonnie Smith, Ph.D., Historian, Rutgers University; Two faculty honors ceremonies (Professing Women and Diversity Award); "Approaching Interdisciplinary Women's Studies," panel discussion for Arts and Sciences Week.

The report recommended a three phase program of clarification, centralization, and development:

Clarify: Women's Studies course listings; Cross-listing of applicable courses in semester schedules; Women's Studies brochure to provide general guidelines for program and degree plan and listing of available courses; A position of faculty advisor to provide direct guidance to students (due to the interdisciplinary nature of Women's Studies, this is particularly important.)

Centralize: Establish liaisons between departments now offering courses applicable to Women's Studies degree; Recruit faculty with interests in developing courses to meet requirements; Allow the Women's Studies Office to provide an information base for faculty and students; Establish a Women's Studies research area and reading room; Institute an advisory board or council composed of UNT students and faculty; Communicate among existing student organizations of particular interest to women; Permit the academic community to communicate with other Women's Studies programs; Maintain support for the existing 4000-level undergraduate course.

Develop: Interdisciplinary undergraduate major; 2000-level undergraduate survey course that will apply toward the core diversity requirement; 5000-level graduate course in feminist theory; More organized degree plan and establish standard requirements; Community education.

The report listed the benefits to UNT of implementing such a program:

Expanded enrollment; Potential scholarship funding through national endowments; Publishing and research opportunities in a new and rapidly expanding field; Increased multicultural diversity; Recognition for academic excellence [...] A strong Women's Studies program at UNT would benefit all involved parties: the faculty, the University, the community, and the South Central academic region. From the evidence presented in this study, we firmly believe that UNT has the necessary resources to implement this plan of action directly and would stand to benefit in the short term and in the future as the discipline matures.

At the heart of the five page report was a two inch box insert for a proposed Women's Studies budget which requested university funding for a half-time Coordinator, a half-time clerical position, two graduate assistants, as well as small amounts for a

telephone line, office expenses, travel, speakers and seminars, and Community Education. Only a couple of years earlier, Dr. Bogle had come to the belief that UNT had wanted to advertise Women's Studies to attract students, while not spending any money. After Dr. Rodman and the students had proven the value of Women's Studies to the campus, they were now asking that university reciprocate with funding.

Meetings to discuss the report were held with Dean Bell and Provost Brownell.

Eakman describes the first meeting, with Dean Nora Bell:

Barb mostly set it up. It was something that we'd been trying to get done all semester long, and it was mostly Barb. Basically Gretchen and I were "trotted out in our Sunday clothes" to come and show what women's studies was doing. We were able to come and talk about our publications and the awards we'd won and the things we'd done, and the kind of students that we were. Frankly [...] I don't really remember very much about it, except for feeling like "If I can just get through this meeting everything will be okay." Really, Barb and Gretchen carried off most of that meeting. Like I said I don't really remember that much about [...] But the outcome of that meeting was that basically Dean Bell sat down and said in very certain terms that it was her intention to get us funded fellowships from the provost. We later had a meeting with him that summer, Blaine Brownell. She said that she was going to get us out of the English Department and into our own office in the GAB. That was eventually going to be the one where the Honors Department was, and we were really excited about that. We didn't have the slightest idea when that would come about, but we definitely felt like we had proven ourselves and that Dean Bell was on our side.

Cook: How did the meeting with Provost Brownell go? Were you a part of that meeting?

Eakman: Yes, I was. The outcome was wonderful; the outcome was absolutely stellar. We basically got full fellowships for Gretchen and I. I think we had two full and one half fellowships that semester, I don't know exactly. But basically, Gretchen and I were completely funded at that point. At the meeting he was very noncommittal and basically told us what he probably tells everyone, and that was that the university doesn't have any money. But then he came through with the money, and he's still coming through, right? (O.H. 70)

Dr. Rodman also mentioned the support of Bell and Brownell,

Cook: What about the administrative support here, you mentioned, obviously, that Dean Bell had asked you to head the program. Since that has she been supportive?

Rodman: Yes, she has been supportive, and Provost Brownell has been extremely supportive. We've gotten funded, as you know, for at least two years for graduate assistants, I'm hoping that we can justify continuing that into the future. I think we will be able to on some basis. Our dean is a feminist woman; our provost has a daughter who has a graduate degree in Women's Studies. Those things help, you know. They have an awareness that maybe people wouldn't otherwise. We have gotten funding at a time of declining resources, when other departments are being cut back. We can't underestimate that. (59-60)

It is interesting but not surprising that the influence of the women in the Provost's family was noted by several people when discussing his support. Max Oelschlaeger remembered,

Blaine Brownell was the first Provost who showed any interest whatsoever in women's studies and he gave Women's Studies a little bit of money. His wife has some interest in feminist issues and his daughter as well, and I think they may have helped hold Blaine's feet to the fire. So, Blaine from time to time would fund things like the visit of Peggy McIntosh from the Wellesley Center for the Study of Women to the UNT campus, which was a highlight eight or nine years ago, and maybe raised expectations a little bit too highly. Then when Dean Nora Bell came, she was a positive step in the right direction. (28)

Eakman also mentioned Brownell's feminist connections,

Cook: ...Dr. Rodman mentioned to me in her interview that he [Dr. Brownell] had a daughter with a graduate degree in women's studies, were you aware of that?

Eakman. Yes we were. We were aware of that going in. Believe me, the whole women's studies adventure from day one has been very oriented towards public relations; and we never had a meeting [with anyone outside of the program] -- Barb, Gretchen, and I, and Julie came to that meeting as well -- we never went into one of those meetings without a strategy meeting [among ourselves] first. We knew exactly what we were going in there to say. We knew that his daughter was actually at that time working

in the field with, like, the Peace Corps or something, but she was definitely involved in women's studies, women's issues, something like that [...] So that may have really given us a foot in the door. We were in such a position with the university that we could not afford not to take any foot in the door we could get. (O.H. 70-71)

In the fall of 1995, at Professing Women awards the Roundtable presented the first ever Martha Nichols award for longtime service to UNT Women's Studies to Dr. Linda Marshall of the Psychology faculty for her groundbreaking study, the HOW (Health Outcomes of Women) project. The project used many female UNT students to conduct in-depth interviews on health issues with low-income women, and brought much credibility to the university and experience and knowledge to the women who participated. Eakman, Esely and Behnken described the project:

Project HOW (Health Outcomes of Women) is a three-year longitudinal study of 900 low-income women which studies how domestic violence, past child abuse, and availability of resources affect women's health. Our program formed a symbiotic relationship with Dr. Marshall's study. Project HOW provided training and income for Women's Studies students, and Women's Studies provided staff, recruiters, and interviewers for the study. (125)

In the Spring of 1996 the funding received by the program from Provost Brownell on Dean Bell's recommendation kicked in: Beth Eakman worked with Dr. Rodman to develop information resources including information on doctoral programs in Women's Studies and a research guide to help those working on theses in Women's Studies; Gretchen Esely worked with nationally recognized victim's advocate Brian Ogawa in the department of Criminal Justice; Julie Behnken, who had now also assumed many of the duties of leading the Roundtable, worked with Drs. Jill Rhea and Jay Allison of

Communication Studies on HIV/AIDS education for women; the funding also supported Stacy Erickson's work as administrative assistant and undergraduate clerical help.

During Women's History Month in March, the Brown Bag Lecture Series continued with talks from, among others, Renay Ford of the Equal Opportunity Office, Dr. Michelle Walker of the Office of Technology and Cognition, Dr. Marla Stafford from Marketing, and Dawn Tawwater, a graduate student from the TWU Sociology department who had helped lead the fight (ultimately unsuccessful) to keep TWU a women's university.

At the end of the academic year of 1995-96, the Women's Studies report summed up another momentous year's progress:

Great progress has marked the 1995-96 academic year for the developing Women's Studies program at UNT. In its second year under the leadership of Dr. Barbara Rodman, Women's Studies has carried on the momentum created in the previous academic year. Although the successes of 1995-96 are attributable to many factors - the faculty, staff, student groups, and certainly the Women's Studies majors and minors - a new partnership between Women's Studies and the university administration has been the hallmark of this academic year.

With the support of Provost Blaine Brownell and Dean of Arts and Sciences Nora Bell, Women's Studies has become more centralized and thus better able to make use of current academic opportunities as well as better able to serve the students working in this growing area of scholarship. Perhaps the two most significant events of 1995-96 for the students of women's studies were the establishment of an office and the funding of students at the graduate and undergraduate level through research fellowships and support staff employment opportunities.

The Women's Studies budget has also created or enhanced the opportunities for several students to attend professional or scholarly conferences of relevance to Women's Studies thereby networking with other universities and increasing recognition for UNT. This support from the administration along with the continuing efforts of Dr. Rodman, her students, and the supportive faculty and staff has enabled UNT to make

great strides toward the realization of full program status for Women's Studies.

The report then detailed the student funding for the previously mentioned research of Eakman, Esely, and Behnken, the administrative work of Erickson, and the undergraduate clerical help.

The report also listed the conferences attended by Women's Studies students supported by travel grants. These included the 1995 National Women's Studies Sixteenth Annual Conference, The Women's Caucus at the South Central Modern Language Association Conference, The Fifth Annual National Conference on Campus Sexual Assault, The National Training Program for Morita Therapy, The Fight for Abortion Rights and Reproductive Freedom Tenth Annual Conference, The International Conference on Women in Film, and The Feminist Family Values Conference.

The report also detailed the importance of the new Women's Studies office:

Located on the fifth floor of the GAB in room 517, the Women's Studies office has been an invaluable asset...Besides the benefits of an association of Women's Studies with a physical space on campus, the office has provided the following: A central location for Women's Studies Informational Resources; a telephone contact for students; a central location for coalition building among campus women's groups: the Women's Studies Roundtable, the Women's Collective, SisterSpeak, the Women of the NAACP (WIN), Hispanic Students for Higher Education, Women's Programming.; a space for mentoring and advising; meeting space; office space for Women's Studies graduate students research.

While the report pointed out these benefits, it also noted there was room for improvement:

While the graduate students of Women's Studies have been pleased with the new office in the GAB, the location on the fifth floor has not facilitated access to a large majority of students due simply to lack of visibility and

an intimidatingly athletic climb up four flights of stairs. We feel these problems will be solved when the office is moved from this temporary space into a permanent space which is more accessible.

Dr. Rodman continued to work with students and the graduate office to tailor degree plans suited to students specific interest. A major milestone was reached in May of 1996 when Beth Eakman became the first person to receive a Master's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies with a focus in Women's Studies. Eakman's thesis dealt with the body as trope in the works of African-American novelist Toni Morrison.

Eakman reflected on the impact the Roundtable had on the campus:

[...] we always had this vision of the university people teaching women's studies or being interested in women's studies, women's issues, as sort of these orbiting satellites that didn't have a center, and we were always trying to reach out to them and get all these people with this similar interest into the same place, in the same room at the same time. So, what we tried to do was go to some of the university programs or university majors, the various disciplines that had an interest we knew that were supporting women's studies in this centerless orbit. (O.H. 51) [...] And what has happened with the Roundtable and The Collective and now the Women in the NAACP and things like that is that there is coalition building. And I think that is perhaps the great triumph of everything, of all of the women's groups and the Roundtable and women' studies -- is the coalition building. That was one of our first goals in the Roundtable, was to be an information clearinghouse, so that we didn't have ten different organizations operating in a vacuum with three people in each. But we had one where thirty people can come. That's the goal, and that can happen. If that can continue to happen that's great. (O.H. 35)

Upon graduation, Eakman was named UNT's Most Outstanding Woman Graduate Student at the "Metamorphosis" ceremony hosted by Joanna Hurley, wife of the Chancellor. There can be no doubt that having one of North Texas' most brilliant and accomplished students in such a vital and visible role made it impossible for even the most traditional academics to impune the academic integrity of Women's Studies. The

impact that Beth Eakman had on Women's Studies at UNT, and therefore on scores of women students past, present, and future, was profound and powerful, and is still being felt.

Student involvement, including the collaboration between the Roundtable and the Women's Collective also continued to have a positive impact on the campus. After receiving the conference announcement in the Women's Studies office, the Roundtable helped coordinate funding to send five members of the Collective to the Fifth Annual Conference on Campus Sexual Violence at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque at the end of March. During the summer, information gathered at this conference and from Women's Studies would be used in first-year orientation sessions at UNT when Ona Tolliver of Women's Programs asked the Collective to supply panelists to address the issue of date rape. A main theme of the New Mexico conference was getting men involved in sexual assault awareness issues, and Collective facilitator, and later Women's Studies minor, Bernie Donahue insisted that a man be included in the panel. Collective members Erica Richey and Alison Hahn, along with Julie Behnken, who was now president of the Roundtable, participated in the sessions.

Another student group, SisterSpeak, had also formed in the Spring, as a feminist discussion group. Founders Lynn Murray, Andrea Crawford, and Jennifer Blackshear said they were inspired to form the group after taking the Women in Politics course taught by Dr. Cox. The group published an astonishing journal of writings on a variety of issues, from dealing with the aftermath of sexual assault ("What Rape Feels Like"), to sexual

harassment by teachers (“Please Get Your Penis Off My Back”), to oppressive attitudes about hair. The journal included a description of the group written by the editors.

We laugh, we talk, we learn. It’s like having a conversation with your best friend, only bigger. SisterSpeak is a feminist discussion group. It’s one huge, diverse intelligent, funny conversation. Each discussion bridges the gap between feminist theory and girlfriend conversation. SisterSpeak is a place where each person takes everything they have and everything they are - their culture, religion, sexuality, education, politics - their selves - and puts it on the table and hopefully we’ll all walk out with a little more than we walked in with. (Journal 1, page 1)

The introduction also stated the purpose of the journal.

Well it’s not Seventeen, Cosmo, or Glamour. There are no mascara tips, fashion spreads, or boyfriend quizzes. It’s true. SisterSpeak: Truth, Tidbits, and Tirades, will not feature any of the above mentioned articles, but what you will find inside is a woman who wants her science teacher to get his penis off her back, a woman who loves the way the fat woman walks and another who advises us all to just SHAKE HIS TOWER! (interpret at your own risk) Most of all, what you will find inside is women speaking their truth. Nothing censored, nothing softened. Just women coming together to release the truth they have inside. And you don’t even have to deal with all those perfume samples. (Journal 1, page 1)

The group published a follow up journal the next year. Co-founder Lynn Murray wrote the introduction to the second year’s edition of the SisterSpeak journal, linking this generation of feminists to their foremothers, and consciousness raising with social change:

This issue is very special because of the wonderful women who made it possible. I’m not sure if there is a ‘Generation X’, but I have no doubt in the existence (and power) of ‘Generation F.’ Feminism is alive and well and women are incorporating it into their daily lives. The voices that speak from these pages prove that the old feminist adage is true: the personal is political and the political is personal. I think people often doubt the power of internal exploration and consciousness-raising. They feel it negates from social activism and political gain. But as Gloria Steinem states in Revolution from Within, ‘A revolution is a circle that consists of both

inner and outer change, self-realization and social justice.' I am proud of the work that SisterSpeak has done in that revolution. I am proud of the women that have joined us along the way. Consciousness-raising and social change are two parts of the same whole. One cannot occur without the other. I hope that these writings will challenge, inspire, and empower you. I hope that wherever you choose to begin the revolution, you will find a way to complete the circle. In sisterhood, Lynn." (Issue 2, intro)

Student interest and Women's Studies presence on campus was also becoming a factor in attracting faculty members to UNT, as Dr. Rodman met with several teaching candidates, including Dr. Diana York Blaine, to discuss and welcome their involvement with Women's Studies.

During the summer, Esely and Behnken presented a paper they had written with Eakman at the National Women's Studies Annual Conference. "Spinning Straw Into Gold" related the triumphs and toils of the students' struggle to help establish Women's Studies at UNT, which they likened to the fairy tale dilemma of working and working to spin the straw into gold, only to wake up the next day and have to do it all over again. The Roundtable was re-living the problems noted in the 1970's at San Diego State, finding that indeed, it took a lot of bureaucratic bullshit to keep the program running, but without it the program would die.

In August, undergraduate Charles Cook received a Bachelor of Applied Arts & Sciences degree with an Occupational Specialization in Women's Studies, apparently the first undergraduate degree awarded under any of the university's interdisciplinary degree programs with a focus in Women's Studies.

In the fall of 1996 Julie Behnken continued Women's Studies high profile by coordinating UNT's involvement as a host site for a national conference by satellite

hookup commemorating the first anniversary of the Beijing Women's Conference. The UNT portion of the conference featured reports from Dr. Platt and her daughter, Jean Carmalt, on their experiences attending the Beijing conference; Dr. Brain Ogawa, who led a discussion on violence against women; and a conference call from Jo Ivy Boufford, M.D., the Principle Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health from the US Department of Health and Human Services. The afternoon session featured a satellite downlink from Washington, D.C. with Hillary Rodham Clinton, Donna Shalala, Madeliene Albright, and Geraldine Ferraro. Women came from as far as 100 miles away to attend the Saturday conference, again proving Women's Studies at UNT was offering valuable information and service to the community.

The high profile nature of the event also had an unexpected side effect, two men who showed up apparently planning to disrupt what they were informed by a ultra conservative religious newsletter would be a gathering to "support lesbianism and abortion." When the conference turned out to much less controversial than they expected, they left, commenting to a newspaper reporter, "I really don't think women have all these problems they think they have."

Later in the fall, the Roundtable helped coordinate UNT's involvement in the National Young Women's Day of Action. The Roundtable, Collective, SisterSpeak, and Courage (UNT's gay and lesbian student organization) tabled together in the Union and gathered signatures on petitions to support legislation to classify crimes against gay and lesbians as hate crimes, and to assure clinic access to those seeking abortion services.

The Professing Women awards in November gave out awards to more instructors than ever. In addition, the Martha Nichols award was presented to Dr. Susan Platt, both for her long-time contribution to Women's Studies and her ongoing fight to force the School of Visual Arts to treat women better as students as well as subjects of study. Unfortunately, Dr. Platt would shortly thereafter make the decision to leave UNT.

UNT Women's Studies students and faculty continued their academic success, as the Tenth Annual Conference on Women in Higher Education, sponsored by the University of Texas El Paso and held in Fort Worth in January of 1997, featured three UNT presentations, all dealing with the situation on campus. Gretchen Esely presented an updated version of "Spinning Straw Into Gold," written by herself, Behnken, and Eakman. The paper was recognized by the conference committee with an award as one of the top two student papers presented at the conference. Charles Cook, now a graduate student in Women's Studies, presented "Students as Educators: UNT Students Fight Rape," documenting the Roundtable and Collective's efforts in fighting campus sexual assault, which was featured in the *Journal of Women in Higher Education*.

The conference also featured Dr. Diana York Blaine's "Coming out of the Closet: Teaching Women's Studies in Non-Women's Studies Classrooms," a brilliant, biting, and alternately hilarious and soul searching account of the events that led her to the decision that she could not pretend to leave the feminist analysis behind in her classroom discussions of traditional literary works. Blaine explained her initial wariness to bring feminist analysis into the English courses she was teaching:

While the department knew I was a feminist, and the university has a small, dynamic Women's Studies program, I nonetheless felt confused about how to make the transition from courses that officially sanction feminist positions to those described in the most traditional of terms. (569)

However, when Dr. Roger Shattuck from Boston University visited UNT to give a speech demanding a return to "conventional teaching methods," and what Shattuck called "objectivity" Blaine rebelled, not buying for a second the long ago debunked idea that "scholars" like Shattuck were being objective. She wrote:

The so-called 'objective' view supported by scholars like Shattuck is actually very much defined by class, race, gender, and sexual orientation. In fact, they end up being less objective because they don't acknowledge the fact that their perspective isn't shared by everyone. (571)

After Shattuck's visit Blaine revisited the classes' discussion of A Streetcar Named Desire adding a feminist discussion of the acceptance and approval of violence against women contained within the work. Perhaps the best thing about Blaine's paper is it is another prime example of the power of men's bullshit to encourage the absolute opposite response that they were hoping for. For Dr. Blaine the lecture re-instilled her commitment to activist feminist principles:

Far from a tool that seems appropriate only in certain limited circumstances, feminism offers me a comprehensive way of examining my world and my role in it and reclaiming my own power as a woman and an educator. (571) [...] Feminist pedagogy is not simply arranging chairs in a circle and dancing around issues of sexism, racism, and homophobia; it's an overt commitment to an ideology that foregrounds perspective and exposes power relations, whether in literature, in the classroom, or in scholarly research. (572)

Dr. Blaine's students expressed their feelings and appreciation for her methods:

One student said that coming to my class exhausted him. I told him what a compliment that was. Another said that people left my class pissed off but

he guessed that was better than the other classes where people just left. He added that he liked the class but had difficulty letting go of the authoritarian model, that this change “scared the shit” out of him. He added that I did as well. (573)

Another male student who had earlier expressed sympathy for Stanley after his rape of Blanche told her that he had apologized to the women in the class later because he did not want to be seen as “an apologist for male abuse.” (573) Blaine’s paper was featured in an article in the Journal of Women in Higher Education in February of 1997. She ended the paper by talking about the impact her students’ responses had on her:

[...] hearing all the other student voices who keep telling me I am forcing them to think about things that they never thought about before at all or in an entirely new way, gives me encouragement to continue taking on an establishment that doesn’t always appreciate what I do. (573)

Late in the Fall semester of 1996, one of the most important events in the history of Women’s Studies at UNT had occurred as the roof level closet which the graduate students were working out of in the GAB was replaced by a three-room office on one of the main floors. Dean Bell’s earlier commitment to a viable Women’s Studies office had been fulfilled, as the new offices were in a prime location for student access.

However, after years of fighting for a visible office space, the students were now faced with the task of keeping the office open without funding for an office staff. During the first few months it was not uncommon for university officials seeking space on campus to come into the office “just to have a look around.” Dr. Rodman was committed to her departmental office in English, and the successful push for research funding had led to an assistantship in Criminal Justice for Esely, which meant she also was unable to keep hours in the new office. This left it up to Behnken and Charles Cook, the only other

graduate student in the program, to keep the office open on a volunteer basis while Behnken managed the Roundtable activities.

While Eakman and Esely had shared the burden of leading the student arm of Women's Studies, and enjoyed a close relationship with the leader of the Women's Collective, Behnken would have to shoulder most of the burden alone: the Collective's new leaders were younger students who had their hands full trying to learn the ropes of leadership in their own group. In addition, the groups may have been suffering from being a part of what Gretchen Esely termed a "separatist model" of Women's Studies:

The separatist model divides feminist activism (on a political level) and feminist theory (on an academic level). One of the advantages to this model is that Women's Studies is taken seriously as an academic discipline by the administration. Many universities cannot or will not afford to promote political agendas [...] Although cross-membership and interdisciplinary participation are possible, the lines are clearly drawn dividing political and academic. In this environment, it is much more difficult to view feminism holistically, and one often feels as though she or he must choose between one discipline over another, one cause over another, and one group over another. (4)

To be taken seriously by the university, the Roundtable had been forced into this division, and while in the beginning they and the Collective had managed to be, in Eakman's words, "two sides of the same coin," as time went on this "holistic" view of campus feminism began to wear down and members of the groups were put in the dilemma described by Esely above.

Another reason Behnken was forced to deal with problems without adequate support came about because having a male Women's Studies student as an assistant was

often proving to be more of a burden than a help, as Behnken related in her paper “What About Men:”

There was a small core of graduate students, myself included as President of the Women’s Studies Roundtable, that were the driving force behind the academic student group. A male colleague was acting Secretary for the group - president and secretary being the only official positions, primarily for keeping track of information and efficiency - making it necessary for us to work together closely. This became difficult as his passive-aggressive style and dictatorial “suggestions” became more apparent to me, both one on one and in meetings. Here was a man, a feminist, who espouses the contributions of women and his commitment to ending sexism and violence against women, who was also telling us, ‘You know, what *you* should do...’ or ‘*You* need to...’ whatever he thought. He spoke of equality and respect, while using dominating communication strategies, such as controlling topics of discussion, interrupting, and overlapping women’s speech...This was a very difficult situation for me to handle. I felt bad begrudging the only male actively involved in Women’s Studies, and didn’t want to give the impression that men were resented. But I resented *him* [...] There was a period of extreme tension where I actively avoided him... (11)

Needless to say, with the only two people available to work office hours actively avoiding each other, keeping the office open became even more difficult. The personal impact on a woman who had dedicated herself to Women’s Studies was even more troubling, and illustrates the danger of men’s involvement in women’s groups. I have to admit here that I was the man to whom Behnken was referring, and while I believe that some of the Roundtable’s problems were in part due to traits specific to me, others were typical of male-female relations. As Behnken pointed out in her paper, researchers Pearson, West, and Turner have found that interruption and overlap are “well-documented aspects of male speech.” (11) While Women’s Studies can be a valuable tool for men who are truly interested in changing behaviors which show disrespect for women,

it cannot immediately transform behaviors which have been developed over a lifetime. It is probably the case that the longer a man has been exposed to and has tried to live by feminist principles, the less likely he would be to make masculinist mistakes. But the unfortunate paradox is that it seems to be a part of the nature of activism that often the most active people are the ones who have been newly made aware of the problems they are fighting against.

As is often the case with feminist researchers, one of Behnken's responses to the problems she was having was to delve deeper into the issue and find out other's opinions on male involvement. She gave out a survey regarding the subject to about 300 UNT students and faculty, most of whom had a stated interest in women's studies. She described the 55 responses she received as "wide-ranging and interesting." (10)

Forty-one of the respondents were women. Behnken reported that most of the respondent's believed that "men's capabilities to be feminists seemed to be obvious and necessary [...] women's *and* men's voices are important to the feminist movement and the goal of equality [...] it is a good idea for men to participate and that more men needed to be involved in Women's Studies." ("Men" 10)

Some representative responses from women included a faculty member who wrote, "My husband took women's studies in college and it really has helped in his understanding of women's roles and issues." A graduate student wrote that "My definition of feminism allows for anyone to be a feminist, male or female. I have probably met as many men committed to feminism as I have met women who are anti-feminist." An undergraduate wrote "I think it is great when men take an active role in educating

themselves about the dominant environment and how they are a part of it. If no men cared enough to come to meetings and classes on women's issues, there would be little hope for changing their minds about women's place in the world." (Behnken, "Men" 10-11)

Unfortunately, it has become a theme of feminist writing that often, instead of educating themselves men expected women to tutor and mentor them. African-American women in particular have written of the unfairness of having to bear the burden of educating their own oppressors. Donna Kate Rushin's *The Bridge Poem* may be the most eloquent of these writings. Although she was speaking of her frustration in being a Black woman expected to teach white women, the words also ring true when applied to women having to teach men.

Find another connection to the rest of the world
Find something else to make you legitimate
Find some other way to be political and hip
I will not be the bridge to your womanhood
Your manhood
Your human-ness

I'm sick of reminding you not to
Close off too tight for too long

I'm sick of mediating with your worst self
On behalf of your better selves

I am sick
Of having to remind you
To breathe
Before you suffocate
Your own fool self

Forget it
Stretch or drown
Evolve or die

The bridge I must be
Is the bridge to my own power
I must translate
My own fears
Mediate
My own weaknesses

I must be the bridge to nowhere
But my true self
And then
I will be useful (Moraga and Anzaldua xxii)

Asking women to spend (or waste) their time educating men is a problem that has a long history, Audre Lorde said in 1979

Women of today are still being called upon to stretch across the gap of male ignorance, and to educate men as to our existence and our needs. This is an old and primary tool of all oppressors to keep the oppressed occupied with the master's concerns. ("Master's" 100)

In the introduction to Sisterhood is Powerful, Robin Morgan put it bluntly:

I haven't the faintest idea what possible revolutionary role white heterosexual men could fulfill, since they are the very embodiment of reactionary-vested-interest power. (qtd. in Moraga and Anzaldua 218)

Some women in the survey did voice, in Behnken's words, "cautionary notes of questioned motives, hostility, and the hindrance of women's education." Included was one undergraduate who wrote, "I think it's great, as long as they're there to learn something and not just to pick up womyn." ("Men" 10)

Behnken's survey was inspired not only by the difficulties she and the Roundtable were having, but also those faced by the Collective and SistaSpeak. As Behnken wrote, these "involved conflicts about control by men, pandering to men's needs, and even

division between heterosexual and lesbian women.” (“Men” 10) Each student group dealt with the issue at different times, and with different results.

While not free of trouble, the Collective seemed to have the best experience. Bernie Donahue, who succeeded Kimberly Olsen as facilitator, had made male involvement a goal of the group. This was in part due to Donahue and other Collective members’ participation in the previously mentioned conference on Campus Sexual Assault. The theme of that conference was getting men involved in stopping sexual assault, and since the two main threads of activism inside the Collective were sexual assault prevention and clinic defense they seemed to lend themselves to male involvement. Some women expressed concern and anger that there was so much public emphasis on this effort, but in practice few problems arose because for the most part the number of men involved stayed very low. Men were enlisted in clinic defense and in efforts to fight sexual assault, but the men involved usually stayed out of leadership roles, and their low numbers helped in keeping the focus of the meetings on women’s issues and voices.

The only other argument or controversy raised by this issue came when two women and one man who were not Collective members came to a meeting and accused the group of being biased based solely on the fact that the group’s name was the “Women’s” Collective. No amount of commitments to inclusion could overcome their objections, they demanded the group change its name, and its focus, to overcome inequities faced by men and women. In a packed meeting, the Collective members listened patiently and attempted to explain that they believed there still was a need for

groups specifically devoted to women, especially at UNT. The trio of objectors continued to disagree, and as the debate went on, their arguments became less and less egalitarian, and more and more anti-feminist, and anti-woman. Throughout this debate, and in their future actions, the women of the Collective supported inclusion, but never lost their focus on women.

SisterSpeak would eventually have a more acrimonious debate on men. During the first year only one man regularly attended meetings. He was accepted into the group, and contributed an essay to the journal, writing that “the common vision I share with SisterSpeak is to eradicate the three isms - agism, racism, and sexism, being an African-American, a male, and a baby boomer.” (SisterSpeak Journal 1, page 25)

The next year a few more men sporadically attended, but again there was little problem. By the third year men’s involvement had increased to the point where there was a feeling among some women that the group had strayed from its mission, to give women a place to speak and hear other women’s voices. Behnken wrote that,

Some women were bringing their boyfriends to participate, and the men seemed interested in consciousness-raising, but the discussions ended up being dominated either by the men ‘trying to understand’ or find out ‘what men can do’ for feminism. Some of the women were getting irritated that the group was spending so much time talking about men. (“Men” 11)

These women proposed a compromise: the group met twice a month so they proposed that one meeting would be for women only and one would include men. As they pointed out, even when the meetings were female only, much of the discussion still focused on male-female relationships. This compromise proposal was met with anger by the men in the group, and some of the women who supported male involvement. Many of

the men said they would not participate at all if they could not participate fully. The idea of separate meetings was dropped, and there is no doubt that some women who wanted that separate space left the group. There can be no doubt that the inclusion of males, or more specifically, the lack of ability to compromise displayed by some males and their women supporters, had damaged the sense of sisterhood that the group had built.

I believe the experiences of these three groups with male involvement are illustrative of the problems this involvement can cause unless it is strictly controlled and limited. Male involvement carries with it the inherent risk of changing the focus from women's issues to gender issues. Perhaps even more importantly, because of the sometimes unceasing criticism feminist activists face and the constant battles of trying to push forward an agenda which the community at large is often hostile to, it is too much to ask women who are fighting for women's rights to have to argue with or educate men inside their own groups. One of the most important services women's groups can give is support for women who are not getting it in our patriarchal society.

I believe that the issue of men in leadership in women's groups should not even be an issue. No man should ever be given the opportunity or responsibility to have the success or stature of a women's group or movement depend on his actions or inactions. This is not to say that men cannot lead efforts to help women. For example, male legislators, due to their overwhelming majority, must initiate plans to benefit all of society, including women. Men should certainly take leadership roles in efforts to prevent sexual assault. Clinic defense would also seem to be a place where men could help by dealing with the anti-choice protesters while women escort patients. But there is no

reason men would have to be inside women's groups to carry out these actions. An idea that some male students at other universities have instituted are "Men's Auxiliaries," men's groups who work inside women's groups in support roles, taking care of some of the more tedious nuts and bolts tasks which leave the women more time to deal with issues which only they can deal with.

While male involvement in women's groups may be problematic, men's involvement in the academic field of Women's Studies is a different question. Obviously, academic courses at a co-ed institution cannot exclude men. Dr. Rodman pointed out that they may have the most to gain from taking Women's Studies courses, and noted some very positive classroom experiences she'd experienced with male students:

I think one of the things that interested me most about opening up the canon is that, you know, white men are just as excited about the authors as anybody else is. And so there's something really wonderful about seeing some little fraternity boy from Plainview doing his term paper on Phyllis Wheatley, for example, and getting really excited about it. I have been surprised at how much mentoring men students need, and how much nurturing, they, too, have been deprived by the system that's required other things. And I've had women students comment to me - in creative writing the same students tend to take classes together over and over and they may have a number of classes together- and some of them have said, 'Do you know how different the guys are in your class than they are in Dr.. So & So's,' any of male my male colleagues... (23)

Rodman also mentioned another incident which occurred while she was teaching a required sophomore literature course at Texas Tech with a large number of fraternity men as students:

One of them told me one story I taught ought to be required reading for all boys in high school. It had to do with a girl who was, well promiscuous, but it was a very sympathetic reason, point-of-view, of hers, and he said he

didn't think he could think about girls in the same way after he had read that story.

Cook: Do you know what that story was?

Rodman: The story is "Lust." It's called "Lust," by Susan Minot. It was in a class where you had some choice over what you read, and he and his friends had picked this book for the title, thinking 'Oh, good, a nice racy story.' And instead had had to read this account of what it was like to be this, you know, very pretty charming girl but for various reasons sort of giving her body away to anyone who asked. It was such a sympathetic presentation of her point of view he really felt it changed how he looked at women. Which he told me privately, now publicly there were a whole lot of those guys on their evaluations who said 'She teaches too many women authors.' But that's really the only time I've even got that comment on an evaluation, although I do teach a lot of women authors. (24-25)

However, while male involvement cannot be stopped, and may often lead to changes in their attitudes or behavior that improve the lives of the women around them, their involvement in the classroom carries many of the problems around communication styles mentioned by Behnken. Even if the men involved cause no problems, their presence rules out what is possibly one of the most valuable experiences women's studies can offer to women at co-ed universities: the all-female classroom. Every woman I have ever heard speak of their experiences in an all-woman class has remarked positively upon it. Behnken's survey gathered several comments on the joy of being in an all woman course, including a female graduate student who wrote:

There is something powerful and important about all-woman environments. I've only experienced it once and I felt incredibly free to be who I was...I wish all women could have the opportunity to see what 'all woman' space feels like. ("Men" 12)

A female faculty member wrote that women in all-women courses "were much more open in admitting they were angry, afraid, frustrated, etc..." And female undergraduates also noted the importance of having spaces where everyone didn't focus

on the opinions of men, and where womyn could “rejuvenate their souls and come together as a group.” (Behnken, “Men” 11-12)

Another entirely different issue is that of men teaching courses about women. The male domination of tenured faculty positions makes this situation a distinct reality, and obviously it is crucial that men teaching survey courses open up the canons of their respective fields. However, there is debate over the results of men teaching courses specifically about women. The results at UNT have been mixed: I have heard nothing but praise for Dr. Oelschlaeger’s involvement in Women’s Studies, both in working with Dr. Nichols and Dr. Platt in coordinating Women’s Studies and in the classroom; on the other hand almost everyone involved in Women’s Studies at UNT is familiar with the story of the professor who for years taught Women in US History and insisted on calling all the famous women by their first name. When students told him they thought this was inappropriate, he would respond, “Well, it’s just because I love women so much.” (!) This particular method of trivializing women of historical significance is a common one in university environments, which has been noted by authors such as Peggy McIntosh. (26)

An even more troubling issue is that of men teaching courses on women which distort their reality. Because of the limited number of course offerings, in the past any and all courses which included content on women were included for Women’s Studies credit, even if they were basically anti-feminist in content. Many students have expressed their dismay at taking classes on women only to find them filled with misinformation. As time has gone on and more courses are now being taught by those with a feminist background, this problem has receded, but it still rears its ugly head from time to time. To me, this

points out the imperative that Women's Studies courses be taught by Women's Studies scholars.

While the Collective came out of the debate on male involvement for the most part in the same form as they went in, SistaSpeak's focus would change. Under the leadership of Stephanie Lang, in its fourth year of existence the group would become Sista's Speak, and would focus on womanist goals and discussions. The group developed a close relationship with the Center for Cultural Diversity and its charismatic and brilliant new director, Dr. Pamela Safisha Nzinga Hill-Traynam. This activism also positively impacted Women's Studies as the interest in issues of women of color led the History department to offer a course on "The History of Black Women in the US," taught by Dr. Constance Hilliard. Dr. Hill-Traynam also began teaching courses in Higher Education on women and minorities in higher education.

Lesbian activists, however, were in a more precarious position. UNT's gay and lesbian student group, Courage, has been described by its members as more of a social group and a safe place for gays and lesbians, not an activist group. The Roundtable certainly had members who were interested in Queer theory, but again, their focus was academic, not activist. Some gay women expressed their concern that they were unwelcome in the activist women's groups. One woman wrote an entry for the SisterSpeak Journal titled "Feminist Fear." (issue 2, page 16)

Why are so many women afraid to call themselves feminists? There are a few reasons, but the one that tops my list is the fear of being thought of as a lesbian. I want to know why this is considered such a bad thing... because society persecutes and ridicules gay and lesbian people, parts of my life become problematic. If I choose to kiss my girlfriend in public or

tell my coworkers I'm lesbian, I risk being called names, getting fired or even killed. So what I'm addressing here is privilege, heterosexual privilege.

Privilege occurs when heterosexual couples hug outside the movie theater without thinking twice about who's watching them. It also transpires automatically because heterosexuality is glorified in media, religion, and families... So what, if a woman doesn't shave her legs, has short hair, or is a lesbian. She is just being herself and that's what feminism is all about. Period. Nothing is wrong with being gay, Asian, or a woman. Stereotypes and prejudice are wrong. They lead to discrimination and hate.

I have even encountered homophobia in some feminist circles. For example, two women friends of mine exchanged a small kiss during a meeting of a local women's group. The facilitator of the group later asked them to refrain from such behavior because she found it distracting. So just because someone calls herself/himself feminist, doesn't mean that they are incapable of perpetuating patriarchal/homophobic values. None of us are immune, therefore we must question and keep questioning ourselves to break the cycle of fear. (SisterSpeak, Journal 2, page 16)

The lack of attention on issues facing lesbian women was also revealed in Gretchen Esely's survey on "problems and concerns most prevalent to the members of different women's groups on campus," (5) which was sent out along with Behnken's survey on male involvement. Esely summed up the responses on this matter from the undergraduates:

Lesbianism: While several respondents listed the issues of reducing sexual assault, racism, sexism, and addressing sexual harassment as important, they did not feel that addressing gay and lesbian issues were important or that needs of lesbians and gays were left unmet. Respondents were not asked to give their sexual orientation, therefore it is uncertain as to whether lesbian and gay members felt that their needs were unmet. (7)

Since UNT offers very little or no programming on lesbian issues, has no activist or academic groups focusing on their issues, and because many lesbians had openly expressed the idea that they felt unwanted inside the women's groups, I believe the fact

that no respondents felt lesbian and gay issues were being left unmet reveals a disturbing lack of awareness on the part of the straight community of the problems faced by gays and lesbians. Besides the obvious problem of homophobia, I believe this also reflects a simple lack of education on these issues. Obviously, since Women's Studies is an academic field dedicated to educating the campus on issues facing women this would seem to be a perfect place for women's studies to take a leading role. Faculty members and graduate students in the survey did list addressing lesbian and gay issues as a major concern, which is a sign that leadership is available on this important topic. (Esely 8) One respondent in Esely's survey wrote a comment that points out the importance of education on this and all issues facing women, writing, "I didn't see the point of feminism until I learned about it." (Esely 8)

In the spring of 1997 new feminist voices would appear from a very unexpected source, the North Texas Daily. After years of having to slosh through article after article of anti-feminist bullshit, the campus awoke in February to find feminist voices speaking out on an almost daily basis. The most outspoken and prolific writer was Nok Noi Hauger who contributed many articles, including writings on discrimination by local religious groups against single mothers, a panel discussion on feminism hosted by the Women's Collective, and one on the importance of her grandmother on her life. Courtney Wallace wrote an article on what a great single mother her own mother had been; Amanda Wilkins wrote of the importance of emerging female role models in sports; Tracy Cooper wrote on the hype and "love for sale" attitude surrounding Valentine's Day; LynDee Stephens wrote a moving personal story of being "a 15 year old, straight-A student, involved in

every extracurricular activity [who] also had a boyfriend who used me as a personal punching bag.” She urged intervention of friends, saying it was what saved her life.

The beauty myth also took a pounding from the Daily women: Marty Evans wrote articles on the ever-present and oppressive attitudes about women inspired by the yearly furor over the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue, as well as another article which examined the role of beauty in the death of Jon Benet Ramsey. The editorial page also exhibited the difference a couple of years and decent editors and writers could make: in September of 1995, the same semester as the editorial supporting the pornography at Rick’s Place, another editorial supported the swimsuit portion of the Miss America pageant, saying “taking away this element would take remove the most important part” (9/19/95 p.2). On February 12, 1997, a Daily editorial proposed that it was not the swimsuit competition that should be done away with, but the entire pageant. The writing reflected a high degree of feminist education: “Beauty pageants are an archaic expression of the male’s arbitrary imposition of approval on the desired female.” It ended “We can help to instill a strong sense of self-worth in the young girls by assuring them their worth is not judged by their appearance.” Other editorials in the month stressed the need for better promotion of police safety programs and the desire to keep the Maple Street Residence Hall all-female. The Daily also featured full-page articles on eating disorders and reproductive freedom during the month. There were as many articles with feminist themes in a single month than had appeared in the previous year.

There were still conflicts between the Daily and campus feminists. Because of the almost absolute refusal of the Daily to cover the Women’s Collective previously, many

Collective members had totally given up on the paper, and thus never saw this spate of feminist writing. Despite the best efforts of feminist writers, the editor often counteracted their work. It is a common journalistic practice to have editors write the headlines for articles. The excuse is that this gives the headlines a coherent continuity of style, the real reason is that it gives the editor the ability to weaken, or even contradict the meaning of the story. This happened when writer Brandie Riggs wrote an excellent expose of the abuse women were subjected to in the Men's Gym (which is not a gym for men despite the name), only to have it dismissed with the misleading and insulting headline, "NT Females Gripe About Men's Gym." A year later, a woman editor who had written many favorable articles on women was showered with criticism when the paper chose to accept an insert advertisement from a radical pro-life group.

During Women's Herstory Month (as the calendars now read) in March of 1997, the Roundtable continued to collaborate with other campus and student groups: joining with Women's Programs to compile a comprehensive calendar of the month's festivities; co-sponsoring a panel on the "f-word" (feminism) with the Women's Collective; and hosting a Brown Bag lecture by Dr. Pamela Safisha Nzinga Hill. In April, the Roundtable and Collective helped make UNT's contingent in Denton's Take Back the Night March against sexual assault the largest ever.

Honors Day at the end of the academic year in May provided more proof of the growing contributions of Women's Studies faculty and students. UNT gives annual community awards each year to one member of the faculty, staff, and students. In 1997 Roundtable president Julie Behnken received the student award, Dr. Gloria Cox won the

faculty award, and Peggy Fogle of the Health Center, who had worked closely with Behnken and Esely in putting on sexual assault prevention programs, won the staff award. In addition, several students who had been allied with Women's Studies or women's groups won individual academic honors, including Stacy Erickson, who was listed in Who's Who among university students, and Collective members Erica Richey and Mollie Callahan, who were named the top undergraduate students in German and Anthropology, respectively.

In the summer, the Roundtable and Collective again helped coordinate discussions of sexual assault at first-year orientation. Besides student involvement in discussions of sexual assault, Dr. Mark DeLoach of Communication Studies, who taught Gender and Communications, and Dr. Claire Sahlin of the Philosophy department, the new director of UNT Women's Studies, addressed other gender issues with the entering students.

At the end of the spring, Dr. Rodman resigned as director, and Dean Bell asked Dr. Sahlin to take over leadership. Reflecting on her time as coordinator the previous October, Dr. Rodman's answer to a question about low points sounded remarkably similar to that of Dr. Nichols mentioned earlier. Rodman said:

You know, I almost don't have any lowlights, I have to tell you... It has just been kind of one good thing after another, really, We've got teachers interested in teaching [women's studies] classes in almost every department on campus; we've got students coming out of the woodwork, wanting to be interested; we've got student organizations forming. (54)

Rodman also mentioned the personal importance of her time in Women's Studies:

Women's studies kept me in academia, or else I would have quit before now... Women's studies allowed me to reclaim myself as a human being. And I am wondering to some extent if my involvement there wasn't

something that...you know, I told you that my colleagues got depressed when they got tenure. I think my difference may have been that at a really critical time, when I was very depressed in the tenure process, women's studies gave me a way out. It allowed me to be fully human, fully myself, for a couple of years when I didn't feel I could be that in the English department. The students I worked with took the place of colleagues. They reminded me of the importance of my work when I otherwise might have doubted it. So, for me it's been almost entirely a positive experience to this point. (56-57)

For the students who had the pleasure of working with Dr. Rodman, and for the program itself, it had also truly been an almost entirely positive experience. Dr. Rodman had encouraged and empowered students, as well as convincing administrators of the importance and vitality of the program. Women's Studies had achieved academic credibility at UNT, and changed the lives of many of its students.

CHAPTER VII

DR. CLAIRE SAHLIN, AND THE FUTURE OF WOMEN'S STUDIES AT UNT

Dr. Sahlin's arrival as director marked a transformational period in UNT's Women's Studies program. The large office in the GAB meant that for the first time there was now room for the Women's Studies Coordinator to have an official office separate from her departmental office. After a long struggle to get the University to merely recognize Women's Studies, Dr. Sahlin would now work to have Women's Studies thoroughly institutionalized.

Dr. Sahlin was the first director to have earned college credit in Women's Studies. She had enrolled in the first Women's Studies course offered at Bethel University in St. Paul, where she was awarded her B.A. in Philosophy and Psychology *summa cum laude* in 1982. She then went on to Harvard University because of the strength of their program in Women Studies and Religious Studies. Her graduate work focused primarily on feminist theology and the history of women in Western Christianity. She first earned a Master's of Theological Studies before receiving her Doctorate in the Study of Religion from Harvard in 1996.

Women's Studies scholarship by UNT students was continuing its success. In 1998 Julie Behnken had become the second person, after Eakman, to earn a Master's degree with an emphasis in Women's Studies. Her thesis was a personal narrative, titled "No Fairy Godmothers." In her thesis Behnken wrote that "[...] it is important for me to

write in my own voice. It took a long difficult time to find it and I am not putting it away.” (5) She mentioned the internal debate this caused, as the voice of the “good girl” in her head kept saying “keep it to yourself, who cares?...The whole world doesn’t need to know about your/our problems.” She answered this internal challenge immediately,

Don’t they? What if my problem is the same as or close to someone else’s. If we do not share information then we stay isolated with our troubles and have to reinvent the wheel again and again...If more people talked about the problems, the ‘unspeakable,’ maybe those problems would no longer flourish in silence; women have a long history of being silenced, made invisible. Even as strides are made socially and politically to loosen the strictures upon women’s lives and voices, we often silence ourselves...Though my writing was initially for myself in order to make sense of my life, it also has the potential to challenge others, perhaps to echo something within their own experience. That is what happens for me when I read women’s writing, when they expose the truth as they see it. To tell one’s story is to empower oneself and others. (12-14)

In the Fall of 1999 graduate students Gretchen Esely and Charles Cook were also scheduled for graduation.

In addition, Rachel Key searched the university archives and found that in the period between 1990 and 1998 there had been at least 60 doctoral dissertations and 50 master’s theses written on women or women’s issues at UNT. These works spanned the academic disciplines, including English (17 dissertations, 6 theses), Clinical Psychology (7 dissertations, 6 theses), Higher Education (9 dissertations), Sociology (5 dissertations, 5 theses), Psychology (4 dissertations, 5 theses), History (5 theses), Counseling and Student Services (4 dissertations), Counseling Psychology (3 dissertations, 2 theses) Adult and Continuing Education (3 dissertations), Interdisciplinary Studies (3 theses), Communication Studies (3 theses), Art (3 theses), Art History (2 theses), College and

University Teaching (2 dissertations), Marketing (2 dissertations), Health Promotion (2 theses), Human Development and Family Studies (2 theses), Applied Technology, Training, and Development (1 dissertation), Counselor Education (1 dissertation), Experimental Psychology (1 dissertation), Health Psychology and Behavioral Medicine (1 dissertation), Music (1 dissertation), Drama (1 thesis), Economics (1 thesis), Journalism (1 thesis), Merchandising and Hospitality Management (1 thesis), Public Address and Communication (1 thesis), and RTVF (1 thesis).

The student scholarship was ongoing as in 1999 Women's Studies graduate student C. Alifair Skebe was invited to read her poetry at the annual conference of the South central Women's Studies Association. In *The Gaze*, Skebe explained the importance of Women's Studies to her education.

...I had never read a poem or a short story or novel and looked at the depiction of women in the texts until this past year. In high school, I would read and wonder why I was not partial to the protagonist. I could not understand why the book was considered "great" when I felt bored or less than great as I dragged through the words and images. I trudged down the river with Huck and Jim; I was fuming when Jane went back to Rochester knowing full well his wife was locked in the attic. I read numerous poems of men possessing their shepherdesses and wives and lovers, and I tried to put words to the page myself. How could I when I should have been the silent one - beautiful and possessed?

Through my undergraduate years I had heard of The Yellow Wallpaper and The Awakening, but I hadn't the good fortune to take a class with these works on the syllabus. I read Doris Lessing's To Room 19 in my junior year and something clicked. I was reading a woman's account of the horrors of being possessed. An outlet! A year ago, I began reading more women's stories, awakening in myself an ability to see women in literature. The trouble was I was reading *bildungsroman* for men. I could not identify with the protagonist because I was raised completely different from "him." I was a girl becoming a woman looking for personal role models in a canon full of boys becoming men.

In Women's Studies, I have been shown a wealth of women's literature and understanding. I hope to reproduce women's understanding in my own writing and to convey that to my audience and students. (The Gaze, Spring 1999, p.4)

Skebe's reaction to the "click" experience mentioned by so many Women's Studies scholars mirrored that of Beth Eakman, Julie Behnken, and a graduate student noted by Dr. Nichols, all of whom spoke of wanting to go and replicate the experience for others, and proves a crucial point: Women's Studies, and its valuing of women and students, is contagious.

The 1999 SCWSA conference accepted presentations from Rachel Key, Rebecca Jacobsen, Erica Richey, Lauryn Angel Cann, Kathryn Strong, Kelly Herd, Amy Gingerich and Sandra Elliot, and Anya Davis and Michael Tate. Charles Cook was invited to the 1999 National Women's Studies conference to present his paper "Herstory of Punk." In addition, the Thirteenth Annual Feminist Graduate Student Conference held in Austin featured a panel titled "Women's Subjectivities: Theoretical and Experiential Approaches to Feminist Epistemology," which included Chaone Mallory, Passion Hayes, and Haley Parsons.

Chaone Mallory was a graduate student and teaching assistant in Environmental Ethics who came to UNT with a strong background in ecofeminist activism and made a distinct impression on her students, helping to inspire a new wave of feminist activism centered around ecofeminist principles and issues. In 1998 and 1999 students unleashed a flurry of activism on issues from recycling to animal rights to corporate polluters in the Denton area. A new student group, Critical Mass, focused on encouraging Dentonites to

leave their cars at home in favor of bicycles. (This had already been a popular issue at UNT, as the “Girls Kick Ass” stickers which became popular nationwide in the mid-1990’s, were replaced in Denton by stickers which read “Girls on Bikes Kick More Ass.”) Mallory also succeeded in proposing and then teaching a course on “Feminist Political Thought” in the Philosophy department.

Student interest, fanned by teaching assistants such as Mallory and Vernon Martin, and undergraduates such as Nathan Dineen, made the Spring 1998 appearance of Carol Adams, author of The Sexual Politics of Meat, one of the most successful academic events held by any group on campus, as over 200 packed a large classroom to see her present a slide show on her research.

The Roundtable’s activism was dying down, for the most part due to its phenomenal success: most of the goals that they had originally fought for had been accomplished. Funding for graduate students, office space, more courses and more consistency in course offerings: the substance of these accomplishments, and the difference they made to the university’s academic environment for women was inarguable. These successes meant that much of the work of Women’s Studies, which had been done by unpaid student volunteers, would now be done by paid staff. The Roundtable’s activities in the future would consist mainly of programming, and these programs continue to inform the campus about issues of importance to women.

Much as the Roundtable had taken over and carried the message of women’s studies to the students under Beth Eakman’s leadership, the Women’s Collective would now step in and become the main promoters of Women’s Studies within the student body.

Although the Collective had once been characterized by the Roundtable as being “about feminism, but not Women’s Studies scholarship or advancement,” the Collective’s actions would leave no doubt that they were much indeed concerned with Women’s Studies advancement.

Collective members who were Women’s Studies students made sure that the Collective always had information on courses being offered and degree opportunities. One of the reasons the Collective has been such a successful group was their high visibility. They operated an informational table in the University Union every single week. These tables were packed full of feminist writings, information on sexual assault and reproductive freedom, current newspaper and magazine articles, and most importantly in this context, information on women’s studies. This labor intensive effort of working the tables ensured that information on Women’s Studies would continue to be prominently displayed in public, which in turn helped assure that the expanded number of courses the Roundtable had lobbied so hard to get on the schedule would have enough students to “make.” It is very ironic that after years of struggling to keep Women’s Studies academics separate from activism, the student promotion of Women’s Studies was now taking place on tables whose general content was decidedly radical.

The other way the Collective would positively impact Women’s Studies was in course enrollment. One by one by one by one, Collective members enrolled in courses on women, and more and more of them began to change their minors to Women’s Studies. Under the direction of Dr. Sahlin, by 1999 the explosion in the number of minors had

reached the level predicted by Esely and Eakman in their 1996 report, as thirty-five students were officially registered as Women's Studies Minors.

With much of their activist work done, the Roundtable began a discussion group, Collective Expression, under the guidance of C. Alifair Skebe, graduate student in Women's Studies, Rachel Key, undergraduate minor and Women's Studies office assistant, Stephanie Baird, graduate student in Psychology, and Heather Murray. During the spring of 1999, inspired by Annette Lawrence of the School of Visual Arts faculty, the discussions centered on body image.

In addition, Stephanie Baird took over as Women's Studies special events coordinator, handling programming that had been led by the Roundtable in the past. Cathleen Miller, who had taken over the clerical position, also assisted in these efforts. The list of events sponsored by Women's Studies during the academic year 1998-1999 was impressive: lectures by Annette Lawrence, Diane Negra, Elizabeth Esterchild, and Cindy McTee (Music); panels on Spirituality and Images of the Female Body and on Careers in Women's Studies, as well as a symposium on Women of Color Behind Bars, a dramatic presentation of a play by Pearlle Jones, "The Rage of Silence," and a colloquium with Native American Activist Lakota Hardin. On a campus not known for its activism or for drawing crowds for extracurricular events, the attendance at the events was stunning. The average was around 75 people for each event, with nearly 200 in the audience for the lecture by Lakota Hardin. Most involved gave credit for the large turnout, besides the great events themselves, to the further expansion of the e-mail and mailing lists. Individual contacts continued to be the key to informing the campus and drawing large

crowds, as it had been since the days when Beth Eakman had been making the contacts by telephoning each person on the list.

Another great step forward for the program was the addition of Pearlie Jones to the faculty, the first person to be hired by the university specifically as an adjunct to the Women's Studies program. Increasing involvement of and services to women of color had been one of Dr. Sahlin's top priorities, and Ms. Jones was hired with a grant from the University Diversity Fund "to teach in areas related to African-American women's experiences and to coordinate special events relating to women of color." Jones had served as a Congressional Fellow at the Women's Research and Education Institute in Washington, D.C., the Director of Student Development at Paul Quinn College, and the Executive Director of her own agency that aimed to create awareness of challenges facing people of color. During her first semester at UNT she completed her work in the doctoral program in Women's Studies at the Union Institute of Cincinnati. Jones coordinated the above-mentioned programs by Lakota Hardin, Women of Color Behind Bars, and "The Rage of Silence." Jones also co-taught the Women's Studies course with Dr. Sahlin, facilitated a session on African-American women and self-empowerment along with the Center for Cultural Diversity, and spoke to numerous classes on Women's Studies and issues facing African-American women.

The institutionalization of Women's Studies at UNT was accelerating. During the 1998-1999 academic year, Dr. Sahlin formed two important committees. The Curriculum Committee, which in addition to Dr. Sahlin consisted of Deanna Bush of Music History, Elizabeth Esterchild of Sociology, Annette Lawrence of Visual Arts, Ruthann

Masaracchia of Biology, Diane Negra of RTVF, Ramona Perez of Anthropology, and Jennie Way of Economics, established a set of criteria and selected courses which would be accepted for credit for Women's Studies students.

The campus wide growth of women's studies could be measured as for summer and fall of 1999 twenty-one courses were listed for Women's Studies credit, with seventeen others being noted as of interest to Women's Studies students. The officially credited courses were spread across campus in four colleges or schools and twelve academic departments: Anthropology, Art History, Biology, Communication Studies, Counselor Education, Economics, English, History, Journalism, Philosophy/Religion Studies, Psychology, and Sociology. (1999 Annual report, page 2) Another sign of the progress was that many of the courses in the "of interest" category were courses which despite only a limited focus on women had previously been listed for full credit due to lack of available courses focusing entirely on women.

The other important committee was the Faculty Steering Committee. The goal of this group was "to involve faculty throughout the university in long-term planning for Women's Studies, while providing opportunities for Women's Studies faculty to form a sense of community necessary for interdepartmental collaborative work" (1999 Annual report, page 9). The members of this committee were: Diana York Blaine (English), Deanna Bush (Music), Carol Cawyer (Communication Studies), Shobnana Chelliah (English), Gloria Cox (Political Science/Director of Honors Program), Elizabeth Esterchild (Sociology), Jacqueline Lambiase (Journalism), Annette Lawrence (Visual Arts), Jeffrey Longhoffer (Director of the Institute of Anthropology), Linda Marshall

(Psychology), Ruthann Masaracchia (Biological Sciences), Marilyn Morris (history), Jerry Nash (Chair, RTVF), Diane Negra (RTVF), Charldean Newell (Public Administration), Ramona Perez (Anthropology), Barbara Rodman (English), Jennie Wenger (Economics), Olivia White (Biological Sciences).

The course catalog for summer 1999 featured something never before seen in a UNT catalog: courses listed under the heading “Women’s Studies.” The main Women’s Studies course and Special Problems in Women’s Studies were removed from the UCRS listing and placed in their own WMST listings. The value of the increase in visibility is immeasurable, and the legitimacy and recognition it gives the program cannot be underestimated. Like the opening of an official office for Women’s Studies, the WMST listing marked a major milestone for Women’s Studies at UNT.

In the Spring of 1999 Dr. Sahlin drafted a strategic plan for the years 2000 to 2002. She believed that “With substantial institutional commitment, it is possible for the UNT Women’s Studies Program to become a leading program not only in Texas, but also in the Southwest region of the United States” (7). The institutional commitment she asked for included five main categories. First was securing “adequate and permanent staffing” to ensure growth and stability. This included more clearly defining the role of the Director and funding a full-time twelve month clerical position. (8) (In the Fall of 1999 a half-time position was approved).

The second goal was to increase the amount of courses in Women’s Studies, and to develop undergraduate and graduate degree programs. (9) This would be accomplished by hiring a half-time adjunct instructor to teach one course per semester and assist the

Director (as had been done with Pearlie Jones); “buying out” one faculty member each semester from their home department to teach a course in Women’s Studies; (9) creating one full-time, tenure-track position in Women’s Studies; creating incentives for departments and faculty to develop and teach new courses on women, specifically in the form of stipends and buy-outs; (10) adding two undergraduate Women’s Studies courses (“Topics in Women’s Studies” and “Cooperative Education Internship in Women’s Studies”), and other graduate courses (feminist theory, special problems, experimental courses) to the permanent curriculum; (10-11) and investigating the feasibility of a graduate certificate, an undergraduate major, and a Ph.D. program. (The Ph.D. would be in conjunction with Texas Women’s University.)

The third goal was to increase the budget for programming, travel, and library/media purchases. (13) The fourth was to increase recruiting and retention efforts, specifically by securing permanent funding for graduate assistants and scholarships. (15) The final objective mentioned was to secure a permanent place for Women’s Studies on the organizational chart of the University. (16)

This ambitious plan did indeed call for a “substantial commitment” from the university. If all of the goals were approved it would move the annual budget for Women’s Studies to over \$150,000, of which \$100,000 would be faculty salaries, with \$20,000 each for clerical help and graduate assistants. (17) As mentioned earlier, some of these expenses, such as for clerical help, graduate assistants, and an adjunct instructor, have already been approved in the past, but not yet on a permanent basis. Permanence is the true test of the University’s commitment, and it is an unfortunate fact that only a little

more than one year after the departure of Dean Bell and Provost Brownell, as of October 1999 funding for graduate students for the 1999-2000 academic year had not been approved. After years of struggle and progress Women's Studies graduate students were again in the same situation which had caused previous students such as Stacy Erickson to leave the program.

Of equal importance was the idea of codifying Women's Studies degrees at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels. While both undergraduates and graduates can today use UNT's Interdisciplinary degree plans to major in Women's Studies, the degrees they receive will not reflect this concentration. An undergraduate major and graduate certificate would remedy this problem. The doctoral opportunities are very needed. Currently, there are only eight free-standing doctoral programs offered in the United States, with Georgia and Iowa being the states closest geographically to Texas offering such programs. The planned collaboration on this program with Texas Women's University (similar to the federation between UNT and TWU's Sociology departments) would assure even better availability of resources.

While approval of these goals are by no means assured, it cannot be denied that Women's Studies has proven to be one of the most active entities on campus, engaging its students and faculty who then have become more engaged with the University. This proven value to the students and the university as a whole will hopefully make it easier for the administration to take the steps necessary to adequately fund the continued progression of Women's Studies at UNT.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

The last decade of the twentieth century marked a period of rapidly accelerating growth for Women's Studies at UNT. While courses on women had been introduced in the 1970's, as of 1987 there had been no coordinated effort to implement Women's Studies across the campus and across the curriculum. Dr. Martha Nichols began this effort in 1988, and her efforts and those of Dr. Edra Bogle, who followed her as director, were successful in alerting the administration of this glaring need. 1993, when UNT secured the honor of hosting the South Central Women's Studies Association, marked the beginning of a time of almost exponential growth, when Women's Studies undeniably proved its value, both academically and personally, to the campus community, and its women in particular. Under the leadership of Drs. Barbara Rodman and Claire Sahlin Women's Studies has become a powerful force for women at UNT.

I believe the most important signs of this success were the explosion in course offerings across academic fields; the creation of an official Women's Studies course, followed by a listing of WMST for this course and others which would be under the direction of the Women's Studies program; funding for a faculty coordinator, adjunct faculty, and graduate research and teaching assistantships in Women's Studies; the establishment of an easily accessible Women's Studies office, eventually with funding for

staff; and finally, due in part to the items just mentioned, an enormous increase in consciousness of women's and/or feminist issues throughout the campus community.

Perhaps the greatest measure of this success can be seen in the explosion in course offerings. As late as 1992 there were only three or four courses being offered each semester that could truly be defined as Women's Studies courses, with perhaps another half-dozen including some content on women. By 1999 there were between fifteen and twenty Women's Studies courses, and another fifteen or twenty which included women, being offered each semester. Dr. Sahlin estimated that 1200 students had enrolled in these classes in the previous academic year. In the early to mid-1990's several students considering an Interdisciplinary Master's degree or an undergraduate minor in women's studies were forced to turn to other paths due to the lack of availability of courses, by the late 1990's newer students were faced with tough choices about which courses to choose out of the ever-growing number of quality offerings.

Women's Studies first offered a course taught and created by the coordinator, Dr. Bogle, in 1994 under the UCRS heading. Dr. Rodman taught the course in 1995, '96, and '97. Dr. Sahlin taught the course in 1998, and in 1999 along with Pearlie Jones. Beginning in 1999 a new 2000-level introductory course was added. Another milestone was achieved when this course was included in the University Core Curriculum. While most of the coursework taken by women's studies students at UNT are offerings from separate academic fields, the establishment of these core courses created, directed, and offered by Women's Studies gives students a common core which is controlled by the program. Also beginning in the Fall of 1999, these courses were removed from UCRS

and Women's Studies was given its own heading WMST. The importance of this move in improving viability of the program, especially to younger students who may be unaware of even the existence of Women's Studies, cannot be overestimated.

Funding for Women's Studies at UNT began with release time given to Drs. Nichols, Bogle, and Rodman from the English department, beginning in 1989. In 1994 the work of Beth Eakman and Gretchen Esely, under Dr. Rodman's direction, secured the first funding for students, research assistantships granted by the office of Provost Blaine Brownell. While these assistantships have been continued and expanded in the years since, the funding is still given from the provost's discretionary funds, and is has not yet been made a permanent part of the budget. This funding has also been used for teaching assistantships, and other academic departments, such as English and Communication Studies, have also given teaching assistantships to Women's Studies students. In addition to Eakman and Esely, graduate students Julie Behnken, Charles Cook, and Allie Skebe have received assistance from Women's Studies. In 1999 Women's Studies received funding from a grant from the Diversity Office to hire its first adjunct faculty member, Pearlie Jones, to arrange and teach courses dealing with women of color.

A physical place on campus, both to do the work of Women's Studies, and for students to come for information on Women's Studies, was another major goal reached in the 1990's. Graduate students Beth Eakman and Gretchen Esely were able to work out of an empty office in the Auditorium Building in 1995, but concerns about accessibility and the idea that Women's Studies would appear to be a subsection of the English department led Dean Nora Bell to push for an office in the GAB. In 1996 a storage closet on the fifth

floor of the GAB was used by the graduate students while awaiting completion of renovations which would allow Women's Studies to move into a more accessible venue. This occurred in January 1997 when a three room suite on the third floor directly across the hall from a major computer lab was secured. In the fall of 1997 Dr. Claire Sahlin moved into the new office, marking the transition from a space where graduate students could work on research to an official office for the Women's Studies program. The size of the office, along with the support of the Honors program and its director Dr. Gloria Cox, which had a very comfortable reading room across the hall, insured a friendly working and meeting environment for the director and the students.

Keeping the office open was a little more tricky, without funding for office staff, and because of the directors' commitments to office hours in their departmental offices, graduate students kept the office open on a mostly volunteer basis. Funding for a half-time work-study position was acquired in the fall of 1998 easing the situation somewhat, although the bulk of responsibility for keeping the office open still falls on the director.

The creation of a healthier environment for women and feminism at UNT has been another of the great accomplishments of the 1990's. While a whole range of problems and attitudes, which I will address later, make certain that it cannot be said that UNT is feminist-friendly, or even woman-friendly in 1999, feminists, often led by Women's Studies advocates, have made great improvements in the consciousness of issues facing women on campus.

One measure of this improvement can be seen in the number of events held on campus which are of specific interest to women, as well as the quality of these events and

the numbers of people attending. In 1989 Dr. Martha Nichols suggested Women's Studies sponsor an event, "a substantial one," during Women's History Month in March. Her comment about making sure it was "substantial" is probably in response to the events which had previously been held during this month commemorating women. While there had been occasional events of substance such as safety programs put on by Nancy Stevens of the NT Police, nearly every single year the month was marred by presentations from Mary K cosmetics on the proper way to apply and wear makeup, and others on weight loss and "looking your best." One year, a male preacher brought into speak on women's safety told the women all they needed to do to protect themselves was trust in the Lord. Beginning in 1994, the Women's Studies Roundtable began sponsoring and arranging a lecture series in March that truly highlighted women's achievements and abilities. Today, the calendar of events in both long semesters are full of enriching, empowering programs. Because of the success in networking, these events are among the most well attended on campus.

Women's student groups, including those dealing with Women's Studies, have also brought the issues of sexual assault and harassment to the forefront. Students have been involved in greatly increasing the programs and services involving campus sexual assault at UNT. While some in the administration continue to assert that sexual assault doesn't happen here, because of the efforts of students in consciousness-raising on this issue, many inspired by Women's Studies, entering students and those already on campus have been given a much more realistic assessment of the threat of and means to avoid sexual assault.

After years of feminist bashing and utter denial of the importance of issues such as sexual assault, the increased consciousness of women's issues has even begun to be reflected, sometimes, in the pages of the campus newspaper, the NT Daily. In the early and mid-1990's students involved in women's studies and with women's groups unleashed a flurry of letters and writings demanding these issues be addressed by the Daily. By the late-90's several women on the staff of the Daily began to seriously address problems affecting women on campus and in society. Today, they very often they start by coming to the Women's Studies Office for help and information.

Along with the great successes, there have also been sporadic internal problems within the feminist movement and the push for Women's Studies at UNT. "Bureaucratic bullshit," and the need to be credited by the university for work done, has led to arguments over credit for events or gatherings which seem very out of place in any feminist movement. Universities are places of strict hierarchies, and these hierarchies have at times intruded into the egalitarianism of Women's Studies, although it has been the exception rather than the rule.

Some faculty members expressed concern about the high-profile role graduate students played in the promotion of Women's Studies at UNT, and downplayed the importance of these efforts in institutionalizing the program. I believe some faculty members, again a great minority, have totally dismissed the fact that because of the early lack of faculty cohesion or administrative support, without the work of these talented students, in particular Beth Eakman, Gretchen Esely, Stacy Erickson, and Julie Behnken, Women's Studies in its present vibrant form would not exist at UNT.

The interdisciplinary nature of Women's Studies at UNT has also brought up problems. Some faculty have expressed an open disdain for the interdisciplinary approach. On occasion very talented students who clearly had the intellectual ability to handle any academic offering were discouraged from taking courses which are very important to the understanding of women's issues by professors who felt that because they did not have a background in that field they were unqualified. This elitism is disturbing, especially to the students who had taken these classes and found nothing that was beyond the reach of anyone with a feminist background.

Hierarchies likewise made scattered appearances among the students. Just as some faculty dismissed the importance of the graduate students efforts, some graduate students dismissed the importance of the work of the undergraduates, specifically the efforts of the Women's Collective. Collective facilitators Kimberly Olsen, Bernie Donahue, Erica Richey, Alison Wilson, and Marisa Abbe all made promotion of Women's Studies and Women's Studies courses an everyday part of the Collective's agenda. In the days prior to the establishment of a Women's Studies Office, the Collective's weekly tables functioned almost as an ad-hock Women's Center, displaying a range of materials, including Women's Studies course listings. This was crucial during this time because in many cases these courses were added after the printing of the course schedules which made it very difficult to get the word out to prospective enrollees.

I believe that some of these problems between campus feminists arose because of the strict divisions which were put in place dividing academics and activism, what Gretchen Esely called a "separatist" model of Women's Studies. Women at UNT have

felt the pressure to choose one path or the other, although many fought against it and were able to keep a more holistic focus.

Conflicts between white women and women of color, straight women and lesbians, and women and men in women's studies have also surfaced, although these conflicts have certainly been less severe, and the contacts and coalitions more numerous, than on the campus at large and in the greater society. These conflicts have added to what is undoubtedly the main downside of the fight for Women's Studies, or women's rights, at UNT or anywhere else: the personal toll demanded of women in the movement. Fighting oppression, educating yourself about it, confronting it on a daily basis, while certainly empowering in the long run, can also be draining and unnerving. These issues also point out the importance of Women's Studies to students and to the world. Women's Studies scholarship can be key in addressing these crucial problems and articulating solutions which are inclusive of everyone in our society.

One pattern that developed at UNT has also been seen elsewhere. In 1992, Women's Studies researcher Jean O'Barr had her students interview 18 faculty members from various universities. They found that every single one "had become concerned with women's issues initially through her personal and political involvements, not through her scholarly investigations" (99). This was certainly the pattern at UNT, with faculty members Drs. Nichols, Bogle, and Rodman, as well as the first students, such as Eakman. However, as time has gone on, more young women are beginning to get their first feminist awareness through Women's Studies, as noted by students Erickson, Parsons,

and Behnken. Dr. Sahlin is the first director to have had college credit in Women's Studies.

Another pattern has been that the push for Women's Studies at UNT has been very much a grass-roots effort. Since the very beginning, it seems that at every step student involvement provided the impetus or made the difference in successful promotion of women's studies. Dean Bell wrote that Terry Brown, a history graduate student, was instrumental in pushing through the first Women's Studies listing in the UNT catalog in 1975.

Dr. Nichols said she was enlisted by the chair of the English department after students came to the department asking for graduate courses on women writers. Under Dr. Bogle, graduate students Julie Lei and Kate Yarborough got the original invitation for UNT to host the SCWSA annual conference.

Under Dr. Rodman, student involvement as well as student collaboration with faculty reached dizzying heights. Graduate students Beth Eakman, Stacy Erickson, Gretchen Esely, and Julie Behnken all played critical roles, along with undergraduate Kimberly Olsen and the other women from the Women's Collective.

Of course, the students could not have had this success alone. Dr. Nichols responded to the student requests and not only put together a course but encouraged others all over campus to do so. When Lei and Yarborough came home with the SCWSA conference opportunity, Dr. Bogle worked to get commitments from Dean Bell and others to make sure UNT could properly host the conference. When Rodman and Eakman had

proven Women's Studies value to the campus, Dean Bell arranged for a high-profile office space, and Provost Brownell committed money for graduate student funding.

But in general, the actions of Dean Bell and Provost Brownell seem to be the exception rather than the rule. There is a prevailing belief among feminists on campus, one which I certainly share, that UNT is does not offer a supportive or equal environment for women. Dr. Nichols noted this in her rationale for approaching Provost Brownell in the early 90' s, "I went to him because I had heard that the provost was interested and was encouraging women here at UNT, which was something new for North Texas." (12) Dr. Bogle said she believed the university wanted to advertise a Women's Studies program to draw students and their tuition payments without having to put any money into it. (27) Dr. Rodman noted that even after the growth of the program, she still believed, "Overall, UNT is not a good school for women to be at, and I think again that is something we need to take seriously in the future. The rate at which women are tenured in departments other than English. The obstacles that women face in their academic careers [...]" (60)

While Women's Studies has been able to make progress in this regressive environment, it is still affected by the general lack of campus wide support for women. As Dr. Bogle noted "there seemed to be really no coordination of women's interests on campus: that there was the dean of students office doing things, that there were the women regents professors doing things, that there was the professional women's caucus, and that all of them wanted to improve the status of women, but that nobody knew what anybody else was doing nor was working with anybody else" (10).

One result of this vacuum has been that the women working in Women's Studies have often been looked to to solve any and all problems that arise for women on campus. This has accelerated in the time since the office was established. A parade of students have come through the office seeking help not only on academic issues but a wide range of problems, from sexual harassment to being generally treated like second-class citizens by faculty, staff, or administrators. In addition, women's caucuses, commissions, and individuals working on campus wide issues effecting women frequently ask for help from Women's Studies. While this is encouraging in that it spreads the influence of Women's Studies and feminist thinking throughout the campus, it is problematic because it calls for almost superhuman levels of involvement from those in Women's Studies, particularly the coordinator. This problem is nearly universal for women and minorities in academia: because of their low numbers in positions of power, those in these positions are asked to help everybody else, and are stretched to the breaking point. If they refuse these myriad requests they are seen as abandoning the cause, if they fulfill them they are almost never given credit from the university for the time spent in service to the campus community. Feminist students working in women's groups have also suffered from this dilemma. To me, this situation makes the perhaps the most important line in this paper Beth Eakman's reminder "You can't save the world if you're at the 'peaceful rolling hills'" (O.H. 64-65).

In essence, Women's Studies at UNT has been asked to fulfill a dual role, functioning as the academic center for the study of women while also providing the functions that should be dealt with by a Women's Center. The establishment of a true Women's Center on campus would be a great and needed relief, but has been nearly

impossible to realize. For years, campus women's groups, most actively the Chancellor's Commission on the Status of Women, have lobbied for a Women's Center. Marilyn Boxer noted that "in the early years" of the women's movement in the 1970's people would frequently ask "what about Men's Studies" (161). At UNT this stone-age thinking has continued as we approach the new millennium: in 1999 two very high ranking newly hired officials at UNT, including the female Vice President for Student Development, responded to questions about the delay in establishing a Women's Center by saying that if they opened a Women's Center they might have to open a Men's Center. Eventually, the university approved a Women's/Volunteer Center. This follows the pattern at UNT of a reluctance to do anything that directly helps women only. For years, the coordinator of Women's Programs had also had the responsibility of coordinating services for commuting students. As far back as the 1970's UNT had for a short time a Center for Women and Returning Students. While Women's Studies has been funded, it has frequently been the case that the directors' have had to argue to administrators that the study of women inherently includes the study of men as well. The continued lack of a true Women's Center will mean the continuation of the extra burden placed on those in Women's Studies.

Overall, the past ten years have marked a period of amazing and important growth and institutionalization of Women's Studies at North Texas, which has changed and improved the environment for women inside and outside of Women's Studies, and inside and outside the classroom. There is, however, much more to be done. Funding, which has increased exponentially, has still not been made permanent, leaving a large question mark

over the future. Even if Women's Studies is permanently funded and institutionalized, it still must operate in a campus and societal atmosphere of disregard for the importance of women and the issues they face.

Of course, this discriminatory educational environment and curriculum is exactly what Women's Studies was created to disrupt and dismantle. Women at UNT have made substantial strides in countering the "miseducation" which has long been offered to or foisted upon women, and have begun to give their sisters the education which they need and deserve. The lifelong impact on these women and the society at large, has been and continues to be, positive and powerful.

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